

THE OPEN COURT

*The New Orient Society
Monograph Series No. 6*

DECEMBER

1932

Vol. 46

Number 919

THE OPEN COURT

Founded by Edward C. Hegeler

MONOGRAPH SERIES OF
THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA
NUMBER SIX

ARABIA

EDITED BY
MARTIN SPRENGLING

Published Monthly by

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY

337 EAST CHICAGO AVENUE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year, 35c a copy, monograph copies, 50c

Entered as Second-Class matter March 26, 1887, at the Post Office
at Chicago, Illinois, under Act of March 3, 1879.

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA

THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA is now completing its first year, and and it can look back upon a successful time during a difficult economic period. At the annual meeting of November 18, the following Officers and Directors were elected:

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Six monographs, listed below, have been published. During 1933 we will publish the second series of six monographs as special numbers of *The Open Court*. These monographs will deal with various cultural aspects of the New Orient, and will be edited by leading American scholars.

FIRST MONOGRAPH SERIES PUBLISHED BY THE OPEN COURT

January, 1932. The Heritage of Western Asia. Edited by Professor Martin Sprengling, University of Chicago.	July, 1932. Syria-Palestine. Edited by Professor A. T. Olmstead, University of Chicago.
March, 1932. The Heritage of Eastern Asia. Edited by Professor A. E. Haydon, De- partment of Comparative Religion, Uni- versity of Chicago.	September, 1932. Egypt. Edited by Professor Halford L. Hoskins, Department of History, Tufts College, Massachusetts.
May, 1932. Modern Turkey. Edited by Professor A. H. Lybyer, Uni- versity of Illinois.	December, 1932. Arabia. Edited by Professor Martin Sprengling, University of Chicago.

SECOND MONOGRAPH SERIES TO BE PUBLISHED DURING 1933

January, 1933. Persia. Edited by Professor Arthur Upham Pope, Director of the Persian Institute.	September, 1933. India. Edited by Professor Walter E. Clark, Department of Sanskrit, Harvard Uni- versity.
March, 1933. Russian and Central Asia. Edited by Dr. Berthold Laufer, Curator, Department of Anthropology, Field Mu- seum of Natural History, Chicago.	October, 1933. China. Edited by Dr. Berthold Laufer, Field Museum of Natural History.
May, 1933. Japan. Edited by Professor Quincy Wright, De- partment of Political Science, Univer- sity of Chicago.	December, 1933. Northern Africa.

Those who are desirous of becoming members of the New Orient Society of America are invited to apply for particulars of purposes and privileges of membership to the SECRETARY, CATHERINE E. COOK.

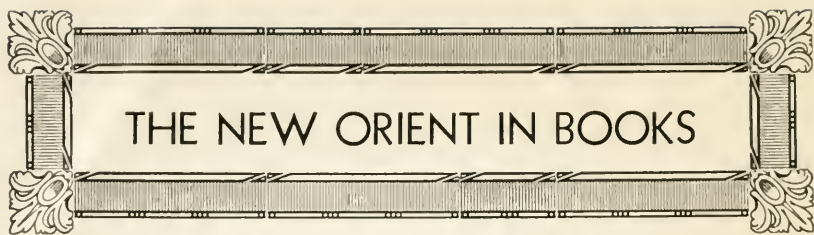
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THE NEW ORIENT IN BOOKS

Golden Phoenix. By Princess Der Ling, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, \$3.00.

A most charming work, beautifully illustrated in colors and revealing the delicate art of China both in subject and treatment. It comes as a spiritual relief after the distressing flood of war books relating to the Orient.

The fairy tale quality of the stories has an artistic appeal to the grown-up and an entrancing appeal to the child. It makes a sumptuous gift book for old and young.

The delicate colors, the golden scents, the soft music of old world China are brought to us in these stories by Princess Der Ling. Here are fantasy and romance exquisitely wrought in tales of love and intrigue, woven around the life and customs of the Chinese Imperial Court.

Princess Der Ling, author of *KOWTOW*, *OLD BUDDHA*, and other books on China, was chief Lady-in-Waiting to the Dowager Empress when that remarkable old lady ruled all China from the Forbidden City. As no other writer of the present day, she knows this city. A delightful style and vivid imagination supplement this knowledge, so that, whether she is writing of social customs and diplomacy, as in *OLD BUDDHA*, or of the lighter and more colorful side of Oriental Life, as in the present volume, she holds her reader spellbound throughout.

* * * * *

Storm Over Asia. By Paul Hutchinson: New York, Henry Holt & Co. \$3.00.

The term "News Book" may properly be given to this very able presentation of the present unsettled situation created by the Manchurian struggle.

To those who already have a picture of the chaos in Asia, the book presents nothing new. But to those who have but a sketchy idea that something is happening to unsettle the pleasant dream of European and American destiny as rulers of the world, it comes with something of a shock.

Japan, China, India, Russia—these are the storm centers in Asia. One book is too short to give more than barometric pressure for so many centers, but within the limitations Mr. Hutchinson has set for himself he has succeeded uncommonly well. There is an able presentation of Japan's position and the reasons therefore. The Far East is still in the realm of realpolitik and events are determined by the balance of force politics. And Mr. Hutchinson properly doubts the efficacy of any international peace machinery to restrain Japan by resolutions. Mr. Hutchinson brings out with clarity, every bid for continental power which Japan has made in a generation has come to nullity. She has always paid more than she gained. Manchuria may not be an exception.

Soviet Russia's relation to Asia also is somewhat sketchily developed. Like most writers, Mr. Hutchinson attaches disproportionate importance to Russia's rôle. By reason of propinquity, momentum and a historic pull toward the East, it is a weightier factor in the Eastern struggle than other great powers. But the difference is mainly one of degree. Its rôle differs in degree but not in kind from that of Great Britain and the United States.

Of all the books on the storm in Asia which the Manchurian struggle has released this is, I believe, the best.

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XLVI

CHICAGO
THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY
1932

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1932

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ABD' UL-AZIZ IBN SAUD, KING OF NEJD AND AL-HIJAZ

Frontispiece to The Open Court

THE OPEN COURT

Volume XLVI (No. 12) December, 1932

Number 919

THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY MONOGRAPH SERIES

NUMBER SIX

MYSTERIOUS ARABIA MODERNIZES

BY M. SPREGLING

IN 1904 David George Hogarth, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, published a book, which he called *The Penetration of Arabia, A Record of the Development of Western Knowledge concerning the Arabian Peninsula*. The record was slim enough. The first sentence is: "Arabia, a land larger than peninsular India, lies in the heart of the Old World, and beside its main road of commerce, but we know much of it hardly better than the Antarctic continent." The words "Antarctic continent" show that this was written before the explorations of Wilkes, Amundsen, Scott, and Byrd. This fact will help the American reader appreciate the measure of our ignorance of famed and fabled Araby indicated for just about the year 1900 by a man who was to the hour of his death no long time ago the greatest English-speaking authority on the world's general knowledge of modern Arabia.

This ignorance of our own in these modern times, wide-spread and, except for a small number of experts especially interested for whatever reason, more dense even than has been suggested, is not surprising. By its own products as known about 1900 and by its physical features Arabia is not an attractive land; it offers temptation neither to the traveler in search of pleasure nor to the colonizing settler, neither to conquering army nor to raiding host from richer lands. Throughout historic times, as we now know them, roughly for some 5000 years past, it has been in comparison with surrounding territory in the main a hot, arid, barren, poverty-stricken section of the earth's surface, the very heart and center of that camel-nomad area, which was outlined in the first monograph of this New Orient Series, printed in the *Open Court* for January, 1932. It may, indeed, as my friend Henry Field points out in his article in this number, have been very different at a time to be measured by geological or glacial periods. In some relatively slight measure there may have been continuous deterioration throughout

the past 5000 years, or pulsing cycles of changes such as Huntington believes to have followed each other¹. Some change may be indicated, as Mr. Field assumes, within 1500-1800 years by the dry wells of Castle Burku well within the western Syrian desert; but that Rome ever had a legion to spare for this forlorn desert outpost is most improbable—a manipule, or even a century is much more likely, and for these water may have been brought in from the very first. In any case there is no evidence to show that even this northerly region within historic times was ever a garden of Eden, or that a Roman garrison enjoyed being there. Likewise in the south-land, the Yemen, the breaking of a dam or of several dams is neither clear evidence of sudden or slow deterioration of climate nor other than a legendary cause for sudden loss of prosperity. Loss of prosperity was one of the contributory causes of the human neglect which allowed the dam or dams to break and which made no effort to repair the damage. Of temporal and local, sometimes wide-spread changes in productivity and relative prosperity we have, indeed, trustworthy record; but these are practically always accompanied and often caused by loss or gain in human enterprise and energy or neglect and shiftlessness. In general, aside from restricted areas it remains true for that historic time of which we have written record, that Arabia in the main is the land of the roving herder, ever unpleasantly near the starvation line. As Taha Hussein rightly emphasizes, the peninsula of the Arabs today is surprisingly like the peninsula as it was in the days of ancient Persia and ancient Rome. It was then and is now, in general, a land from which people emigrate and to which few immigrate. Even roving bands in folk-migrations from or through more favored regions, east and north and south, might be pushed in by force, but would hardly be drawn in by pleasing prospects.

About this land there hovers in the nature of man and things just one attractive force, the mystery of the unknown. This is true of the very earliest allusions to and accounts of Arabia known to us. That the people along the lower Tigris and Euphrates, after as well as during the age of flint, knew something of Arabian territory and had contact with it seems certain. Certain of the stones they used for statues, perhaps also some of the ivory and gold and silver they used, came to them from or through Arabian lands. But their references to these lands and to their traffic with them are

¹Huntington and Visher, *Climatic Change*, New Haven, 1922, p. 64 ff.



ARABIA

hauntingly elusive. My friend, R. P. Dougherty of Yale, has just attempted to pierce through the veil of their mystery from a new angle in his latest book just off the press, *The Sealand of Ancient Arabia*. After much study he is fain to confess that he has as yet succeeded but partially and much remains uncertain. A glance at the story of ancient Egypt as Breasted wrote it will show the reader that the Egyptian, too, must have had commerce very early with the inhabitants of the peninsula somewhere along the Red Sea coast. But the Egyptian did not greatly love his uncouth Asiatic brother, though he needed or wanted his wares. Hence much vagueness and uncertainty envelopes his dealings with the men particularly of the Arabian peninsula. Or take our Bibles. There is indeed the Queen of Sheba and there is in bits and fragments considerable else. Again we distinctly have the feeling of something not well or intimately known to the writers except for certain points of easy contact; but rather for the most part there hovers over their statements the vagueness, the mystery, sometimes the terror of the largely unknown. It was Greek curiosity and commercial enterprise rather than Assyrian and Roman lust for conquest and art of government which lifted the veil for a moment and gave us early in the Christian era the curious map of Ptolemy, which proves on close examination surprisingly well informed. But those who encompassed in their persons all this information were few indeed. To most men, even to scholars and learned historians in the Roman empire Arabia remained what it had always been to the minds of such as they, a region of mystery, a howling wilderness, and yet somehow, curiously, a "land of gold and incense and winged serpents."

The interest of our European forebears was not greatly stimulated nor was their knowledge increased by the establishment of a Mohammedan empire. This rose, indeed, large, terrifying, mysterious out of the Arabian wastes. But this same empire, on the one hand, closed the boundaries of its native peninsula for many centuries against all intrusion of any European curiosity or cupidity that might have existed more effectively than had ever been the case before; and on the other hand, it moved the seat of its authority from its native hearth to less forbidding lands and presently permitted its birthland, as Taha Hussein points out, to drift into a state of ignorance, neglect, and decay under the dominance of the nomad and his internecine feuds and raids to an extent which rivals

and outstrips any known state of disorder and anarchical chaos known to have existed before Mohammedan times. For a few centuries Mohammedan historians and geographers take an active and sometimes a personal interest in it. Then, until the advent of the Ottoman Turk at about the time when America was discovered, this, too, wanes, and great authorities, writing in Arabic on history and geography, tell of Arabia, except for the pilgrim routes and the holy cities, from hearsay only or from second-hand information going back in part to the ancient Ptolemy himself.

With the Ottoman capture of Constantinople comes the Renaissance in Europe, which means, even in the arts, the dawn of an age of scientific human curiosity. This curiosity, aided by the frustrated hopes of the futile crusading movement as well as by positive knowledge and contacts, acquired in these same crusades, leads to that era of exploration and discovery of which our own America is by all odds the greatest result. From America we can now look back and see the leaven working in the opposite direction. Commercial enterprise and missionary ardor, curiously combined at times with political ambition, are the major driving forces, though private curiosity and an adventurous spirit, in the last analysis, lead the way. The Portuguese are first in the field, even before the discovery of America with a voyage along the coasts of the Red Sea. It is, however, an Italian, like Columbus, one Ludovico di Varthema, who is the first European on record as having seen Mecca and the inland of Yemen between Aden and Sanaa in 1501. After this the newly discovered searoute around the Cape of Good Hope brings an irregular but fairly continuous flow of European merchant shipping, first Portuguese, then English and Dutch, and finally French, to the coasts and harbors of Arabia. With the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries enter desultorily and ineffectively upon the scene. For the most part these men are interested only in commercial affairs, few of them penetrate inland from the coast, and they leave little record of value.

Finally in the early sixties of the eighteenth century the modern scientific spirit produces a fine first-fruit in the Danish expedition which is best known under the name of its lone survivor and the final editor of all its accounts and reports, Carsten Niebuhr. Despite its pompous start on a specially detailed man-of-war there was not a vestige of warlike or political motive in the entire mission.

Characteristically, perhaps typical for the century and a half that was to follow it to our own day, the start was made under the urge of a scientific interest centered in the Bible. In the end, little or no interest in the Bible, certainly no restrictive influence of such interest remains in their work and in its report. Within the limits of their orders, of the knowledge of their day, and of their individual ability, they register with admirable objectivity what they observe and what they learn by diligent, judicious, and careful inquiry. Carsten Niebuhr's *Travels and Description of Arabia*, though he actually saw no more than Jidda, a fair share of the Yemen, and Muscat, and though naturally he left much as unknown and mysterious as ever, remains an indispensable classic to this day.

As the first Portuguese venture in the Red Sea and Varthema's account of his adventures was followed by a steadily increasing flow of merchant shipping to the coast of Arabia, so the admirable scientific venture and the fine literary report of Carsten Niebuhr and his colleagues was followed by a noble company of men, well designated by Hogarth as pioneers. Some of them had, more or less distinctly, more or less political ends in view. Among these, almost from the first, England's farseeing interests predominate. Very few of the French names are serving France directly. On the other hand, the greatest of these successors of Niebuhr, the Swiss Burckhardt, is serving or preparing to serve an English Company. But whatever their primary or secondary aims the somewhat more than a dozen men who left noteworthy record of their experiences and observations in Arabia's deserts and oases, nomad camps, villages, and cities between 1800 and 1850 spread for us a thin network of travel-routes over all its area except the most unruly southern Nejd and the desperate Desolate Quarter and filled these in with much valuable truly human and realistically natural information. The first two decades show us four outstanding men. The first of these is the curious, somewhat pompous Spaniard, Domingo Badia y Leblich, who traveled in French interests under the name of Ali Bey and made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1807. The unattached, very able, but wholly unfortunate, Ulrich Caspar Seetzen followed him in 1810. In the second decade the great Johann Ludwig Burckhardt made a complete pilgrimage to Medina as well as to Mecca in 1814, and Captain George Forster Sadlier in the service of the East India Company made the first known crossing of Arabia from East to

West by any modern European in 1819. The third decade is recordless. Then follow in increasingly shorter intervals Planat, Tamisier, and Chedufau with the Egyptian army south of Mecca and Jidda in 1832; the men of the famous Palinurus expedition, Wellsted, Haines, Carter, and Cruttenden in 1834-5; the noted botanist in Egyptian service, Paul Emile Botta in 1836. After a brief interval the line is resumed by Arnaud and the venturesome but luckless von Wrede in 1843, and by the mysterious, learned Swede, George Augustus Wallin, in 1845 and 1848.

The picture presented is neither lovely nor romantic, neither complete nor wholly intelligible to ordinary Western eyes. But it is at least a real human thing in a real human world, no longer a howling wilderness filled with winged serpents. A great, though puritanically fanatical empire, the older empire of the Wahhabi Saoudis, rises before our eyes and establishes harsh and cruel but relatively strict and secure order over the greater part of the disrupted peninsula. The Egyptian governor of Ottoman Turkey crushes this empire and reestablishes the old nomadic disruption and disorder. Turkey struggles ineffectively to hold, to conquer and reconquer what it can, chiefly along the West Coast and to maintain by devious means, a weak semblance of order and government in whatever parts it manages to hold. Meanwhile we see with Wallin, just as we leave this first half of the nineteenth century, a smaller, less religious, more distinctly nomadic empire, that of the Ibn Rashids rising in the heart of Arabia to rival and combat the remnants of the Wahhabi Ibn Saouds.

These are the major elements of the picture which Arabia presents as we enter the second half of the nineteenth century. And these are the major features which it maintains, and which maintain it as a difficult and dangerous and not very profitable area for European ventures. Two added factors, which chiefly affect the coastline, will be of interest to the American reader. One is a passing episode, now nearly forgotten, when for a brief spell American tramp steamers maintained an almost monopolistic trade of forbidden Winchester rifles for hides in the southern region of the Red Sea coast: the rifles helped on their part to maintain disorder in the interior. The other is the growing interest of England with the acquisition of the Suez Canal, especially after the occupation of Egypt, in the entire littoral of Arabia's long coast line. This made, for the time being, little difference for the interior.

There effective political manipulation is notably absent, though a few of the venturesome noted travelers who grace this period are known to have had political affiliations and some served practical political, as well as literary and scientific ends. In the main, these men were learned men with scientific interests or charming recorders of interesting, if dangerous, travels with an eye for wide and genuinely human interest. Among the latter must be named especially two famous Englishmen, whose work possesses both literary charm and high scientific merit, the brilliant, but erratic R. F. Burton and that peculiarly charming and effective Elizabethan who found his individual way into the Victorian and even into the post war era, Charles Montague Doughty. Both men were slightly at odds with their day and generation, and both possessed extraordinary tenacity of purpose and of life; both died not many years ago, after the Great War. Their work should grace the home and mind of every truly cultured reader of fine English. In this same class but on a slightly lower level belong the Blunts, and Palgrave, and the Germans, Maltzan and Nolde, perhaps for the north also the energetic Baron Max von Oppenheim, though the latter clearly introduces a transition to a later age. Of another type, the distinctly learned man, not infrequently a hardy university professor, made or in the making, whose interest is prevailingly scientific and of general human value though his researches may in whole or in part be made in search of quite legitimate information needed by his country and his government, we will list only an outstanding seven, fairly well known, all, in the world of scholars and some outside. With no attempt at specific ranking or definite chronological order we name the curious, energetic, little Parisian Jew, Halevy; the clever but erratic Austrian, Glaser; the Swedish von Landberg in the southeast; the unfortunate Frenchman Huber, and the Germans Wetzstein and Euting in the north, eastern and central; and in the center at Mecca perhaps the greatest of these, the sober Hollander, Christian Snouck-Hurgronje, whose work on Mecca, recently published in an abridged English translation, may well grace a library table in a cultured home, and not merely a scholar's shelves, where the others of this group distinctly belong.

This is the penetration of Arabia in the nineteenth century, its nature and its extent. It finds Arabia at the beginning of the century emerging into a semblance of crudely ordered consolidation;

it leaves it at the end in a welter of disorder in the main but dimly penetrated by the expert's mind; more human but largely mysterious and unintelligible to the general reader; much of it, as Hogarth said, known "hardly better than the Anarctic continent."

In the twentieth century all this changes with surprising speed, presently acquiring something of the rate of the modern machine. In the first place there appears very early in the century in the heart of Arabia a figure as great and as kingly as any Arab since Mohammed, Abdul Aziz II Ibn Saoud. At first slowly, then with ever increasing speed and decisive direction, he builds around him an empire as great as any which has ever existed in Arabia and one which sympathetic observers believe destined to endure despite perhaps not wholly disinterested British fears and French expectations. At any rate, whether it endures in anything like its present form or not, the work it has already accomplished is well-founded and well-considered work and will certainly exert a lasting influence on the modern development of no longer wholly mysterious, but openly and clearly modernizing Arabia.

In the second place, the penetration of Arabia from the outside world takes a new turn, becomes more extensive and comprehensive, until in the matter of exploration it conquers the last wholly unknown sector, the Desolate Quarter; and, on the side of industry and commerce, it begins to carry modern scientific organization and energy and their products and with these a modern outlook on a modern world over a large part of this backward black spot on the surface of the earth.

Some of the exploration remains purely scientific or nearly so. This, too, is fuller and better prepared. The Jerusalem Dominicans, Jaussen and Savignac, the Dane Barclay Raunkiaer, and the Czech, Alois Musil are cases in point. Six great volumes of the latter's work have been published in English by the American Geographical Society under the patronage of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts and of our own Charles R. Crane. A great deal more of this new exploration is intimately connected with political and in part military aims. This is chiefly English and dates back, as T. E. Lawrence has shown, to nominally archaeological surveys before the war. Even the excellently done and charmingly written work of the great Gertrude Lowthian Bell is not entirely free from such connection. And there is, of course, considerably more than we

know about, for much information thus gathered is naturally not intended for public consumption. All those who publish have a measure of the literary style of an English gentleman and of modern scientific interest, often surprisingly wide in range and deep in intelligent insight. Of these every well-informed man of today should know at least Captain Wyman Bury, T. E. Lawrence, Captain W. H. I. Shakespear, Colonel G. E. Leachman, Captain Bertram Thomas, and, last, but by no means least, H. St. John Philby, now become a Moslem in the service of Ibn Saoud. But there are others, as well. Some of these, too, are politically interested. Foremost among these is our own Syro-American enthusiast for Arab unity and advancement, spiritual and unwarlike, Ameen Rihani, whose books deserve to be in every cultured American home. Another is van der Meulen, who tells of the nature of his mission in *The National Geographic Magazine*, Oct. 1932. With him went von Wissmann who had previously worked together with Rathjens with almost purely scientific aim. Most recently we have, penetrating and describing difficult sections of the south, the lone adventurous soul, Fritz Helfrich. And finally we are getting, in *Asia* for Jan. 1933, a report of the activities of Charles R. Crane and their results.

With the first third of the twentieth century drawing to a close we have a situation in Arabia very different from that which obtained in 1900. It is not too much to say that Arabia during this time has come to be pretty much an open book not merely for the expert but for any intelligent American reader. Even the desultory reader of magazines like *Current History*, *The National Geographic*, *Asia*, and the *New York Times Magazine* can scarcely fail to get before him a fairly clear picture of this recently so largely unknown and so utterly mysterious land.

From a land as unknown "as the Antarctic Continent," in these last thirty years Arabia has become a land at least as well known as our near neighbor Mexico. And the land we see is, indeed, backward, as Taha Hussein points out, but its progress is more rapid than Taha's scientific modesty suggests: in this respect Ameen Rihani's enthusiasm is nearer the truth. In the North, in French and British territory, a pipeline carrying the great modern power of oil is crossing the desert from the Tigris to the Mediterranean, a

railroad is projected, automobile service, and airplane travel has become an everyday affair. In Ibn Saoud's great empire, now named the Arabian Saudi Kingdom, the day in the early twenties, when the first automobile arrived at the capital Riyadh is long past. No longer is the automobile in Hejaz limited to royal use as in the days of the Shereef Husain. Automobiles in Arabia now count not by hundreds merely, but by thousands. They preceded the casual advent of European man in Hadramout by some years. Ibn Saoud already has a squad of armored cars and tanks and was recently reported to have ordered some fifty more. These are of great use in the management of the bedouin, and this means that, with Ibn Saoud's other wise measures in helping the nomad to attain a settled life on an agricultural basis, the days of the dominance of the camel nomad over the greater part of Arabia are definitely approaching their end. It necessitates, also, if not a Len Small concrete road-building system, at least the creation and maintenance of passable roads: these have to be watched and kept in repair in a few difficult spots at least, though in the open steppe they need no great care. Taha Hussein speaks further of the telegraph. The wire telegraph is, indeed, not widespread. Nor need this be. Over the wide expanse of his domain Ibn Saoud, with the full assent of his theological council, is building a series of five or six wireless stations. These need no wires, which can easily be cut, and are much better for communication in Arabia, just as the automobile probably makes unnecessary elaborate and extensive railroad construction and upkeep. We need not speak here of schools, as Taha Hussein says all that is necessary about them. But we must add at least a word about sanitary reforms. The fundamental law creating a sanitary service for Mecca and the Hejaz, promulgated in 1926, and additional measures added in 1931 are just now being translated for the American Medical Association at the University of Chicago. Under Ibn Saoud's watchful eye these are not merely on paper. Reports of the latest pilgrimage in 1932 show that Jidda, Mecca, Mina, Taif, and Medina are supplied with sufficient, if not ample, modern and efficient hospital service, and that sanitary cleanliness, comparable to our own, is being maintained at the great concourse of the pilgrimage. Compulsory vaccination is also being enforced. The pilgrimage is decidedly less of a hazard than it was fifty or even ten years ago. An orderly, well-regulated, and supervised

automobile service between all the holy cities adds to the pilgrims modern comfort and is one measure among many to prevent them from being fleeced. It is no longer an adventure in untamed wilds to go to see Arabia. Not even in the Yemen is this the case any longer. Despite the cunning timidity and shyness of the Imam Yahya, there, too, modernization is well on its way, as K. S. Twit-



Courtesy of Asia Magazine

ARABIA MODERNIZES

chell's articles, beginning in *Asia* for January, 1933 make amply evident.

Arabia is modernizing, and it is uniting in a modern way. Partly under the tutelage of Great Britain, concerned, among other things, for the peace and safety of the Near East, partly under the urging of enthusiasts like Ameen Rihani, whose word has weight

in Mecca, Riyadh, and Sanaa, and partly by the modernization of Arab rulers and influential men themselves, an understanding between existing Arab states, despite the artificial boundaries in part forced upon them, has already been reached or is in the making. Within the last months wise and generous action on the part of Ibn Saoud, in keeping with this understanding, prevented threatening war between him and Imam Yahya, without the least outside pressure and interference. All is by no means safely attained as yet, but, as Ameen Rihani points out, wise limitation of interference by foreign powers, especially Great Britain, bids fair to create a *pax Arabica* such as has never existed in the annals of the past.

Mysterious Arabia is modernizing. No small part of it is even now, considering its late start, surprisingly far along on the modern road, and all of it is committed to a program of modernization. America has treated the Arabian Saoudi Kingdom as a modern nation by inviting its coöperation in our disarmament proposal. We, the people of America, bid new, reforming Arabia welcome into our fellowship and hail with delight the aid our noble fellow-citizens, Charles R. Crane and Ameen Rihani, are giving to the source and homeland of Islam in its long and arduous task. It should be represented at the Century of Progress Fair by something better than the streets of Cairo and the bedouin riders with Buffalo Bill in 1893; it is, indeed, an outstanding proof for the fact that this is a Century of Progress.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ARABIA

BY AMEEN RIIHANI

Freike, Mt. Lebanon

IT IS proposed in this article to "sketch the modern political situation," as the editor suggests, "throughout the whole of Arabia." Considering the scope of the subject, however, and the variety of its many angles, even a sketch may overrun the contemplated space. For the whole of Arabia embraces the country that lies between the Taurus mountains, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the hills of Iran—from Aleppo, roughly speaking, to Aden and from Baghdad to Jerusalem—with a dozen principal states that are independent of each other and as many rules, primitive and modern and nondescript, ranging between the tribal and the mandatory.

Geographically, there are no distinctive frontiers between the north and the south of the country or between the east and the west; but politically the divisions are factual, and educationally they are conspicuous. The people of the north, of Iraq and Syria and Palestine, are more educated and, in a modern sense, more progressive than the people of the south of the peninsula proper; but they are also more dependent, economically as well as politically. In the north there are schools and mandates and political discontent; in the south there are no schools of a modern character, no mandates, and, outside a few of the states along the coasts and around Aden, no discontent arising from the intervention or the rule of a foreign power. In the north, one of the four mandatory States, Iraq, has achieved complete sovereignty, but is not yet so free from foreign intervention as the Yaman under the Imam Yahya or the dual Kingdom of Hejaz and Najd. In other words, there is more political independence and less education in the south than there is in the north; and there is in the north a state of things, political, social and religious, which is not known in the south and which is chiefly the outcome of a mandatory system of government.

Moreover, the north is a field of intellectual and political forces, which are dynamic and portentous, still clashing at certain surface points, but with a tendency nevertheless, even under a system of foreign supervision and division, to converge, to fuse and consoli-

date; while in the south there are material and moral forces, that is to say the tribes and that religious sway that finds its highest expression in a tribal solidarity, the greater part of which is today under the dictatorship of King Ibn Sa'oud. What chance these two national political currents have of meeting and flowing together in the future, is a question that concerns, not only Arabia, not only the Arabic-speaking world, even the world of Islam since Arabia is overwhelmingly Islamic, but also the leading powers of Europe. Here in fact is the most important feature, the very core of the subject; and after a brief outline of the present political situation in the various states, it will receive the attention it deserves.

I

Beginning in the north, in the mandated countries, it is well to recall that the purpose of the Allies at the Conference of Versailles was to dispose in a nineteenth-century manner, of the territory that was wrested from the Turks—to the victor belong the spoils. But the democratic idealism of President Wilson, howsoever received by the veterans of a cankered diplomacy, overcame the colonization passion of the leading European powers and finally achieved a triumph in the newly conceived system of the mandate. Here was the salvation of a people who were not really conquered, who, on the contrary, had helped the conquerors in the hope of achieving their emancipation. This was of course guaranteed; for, besides the pledges made to King Husein¹ and the proclamations to the people of Iraq² and the people of Syria and Palestine,³ Article XXII of the Treaty of Versailles is in itself the most conclusive. Here is a charter of rights to the people of the conquered territory. But the skeptics shook their heads. As an article in a covenant it is unparalleled, but as a working principle it is destined to failure. The skeptics were right. There is a gulf, indeed, between the mandate in theory and the mandate in practice.⁴

For this very reason, however, it is bound to succeed in its initial purpose. Curious as it may seem, the ideal of Woodrow Wilson, which has captured the heart of every people aspiring to emancipation, is proving to be as potent negatively as it was con-

¹*Around the Coasts of Arabia*, chap. XII, p. 111-12.

²Gen. Maude's Proclamation to the people of Iraq, March 8, 1917.

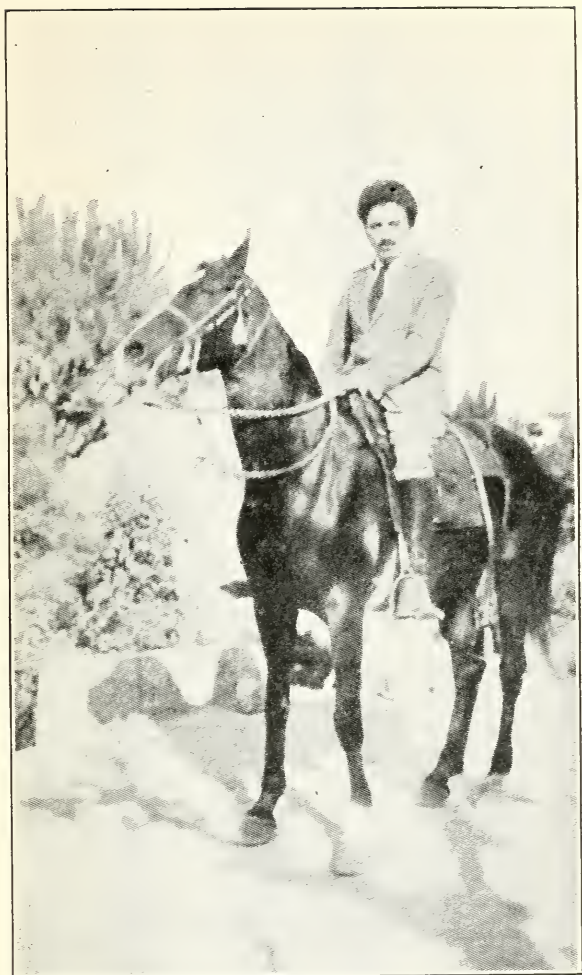
³The joint Declaration of Great Britain and France, November, 1918.

⁴The mandate is divided into three classes, A, B, and C. The reference in this article is to the Class A Mandate.

ceived to be in a positive manner. Whether its great author ever saw it in this light, whether his vision encompassed the happy default, which was to be tantamount to the happier achievement, is doubtful. But there it is standing on its head and accomplishing the miracle. The Powers are committed to the mandate; the mandate can not be put into practice as "a sacred trust of civilization"; the yoke of colonization can not be substituted for it; ergo, the mandate must be abandoned and the mandated people, having gone so far in the pursuit of their freedom and learned something of its modern ideology and practice, must be allowed to continue under another instrument, a treaty, which is consistent with this development.

That is what has happened in Iraq. For the League of Nations and the Mandatory Power have realized that, aside from the costliness of the undertaking, it is futile to continue in the effort to harmonize—let us concede that such was the case—between the theory and the practice of the mandate. It may not be so utterly devoid of good to all the parties concerned that it took ten years to arrive at this decision. But the people of Iraq have been consistent from the beginning. They never accepted the mandate, and they continued to struggle against it. I was in Baghdad when the first treaty between the British Government and the Government of Iraq was signed (October 10, 1922); and in spite of the fact that the mandate was not mentioned in it and that King Faisal in a proclamation assured the people that it guaranteed to them national sovereignty and the entrance of Iraq into the League of Nations four years after the settlement of the boundary dispute with Turkey, it was accepted under protest.

But the Constituent Assembly, convening in Baghdad a year later, refused to ratify it without certain amendments;—the hand was that of the Treaty, but the voice was that of the Mandate. The debates, the first of their kind in the City of the Khalifs, were fiery and coruscating. Even a Labor Cabinet, Mr. MacDonald's first, lost its temper, and with a dramatic gesture threatened to refer the treaty to the League of Nations, if it was not accepted *in toto*. The Assembly adjourned without taking notice. But the boundary dispute between Turkey and Iraq offered an opportunity for another threat—the loss of Mosul—and the Assembly was re-convoked. Out of a



Courtesy of Constable & Co., Ltd.
AMEEN RIHANI

hundred and ten members only sixty-nine attended. Nevertheless, the treaty was put to the vote and passed by a very small majority.

But the opposition continued and the agitation for a revision came to a head four years later, when negotiations were started for another treaty more liberal in terms and more conclusive. King Faisal and his Prime Minister went to London for this purpose, and after several interruptions and resumptions of the negotiations, the treaty was signed (December 14, 1927) and the entrance of Iraq into the League of Nations was postponed another four years. For this and other reasons it was not ratified by the Legislative Assembly; it precipitated the fall of two Cabinets; it was a contributory cause of the suicide of the Prime Minister Sa'doun Pasha; and it remained the subject of Government negotiations and parliamentary debates in London and Baghdad until the question of ending the mandate was officially placed before the League of Nations.

Even the final treaty, which actually takes the place of the mandate, invests Iraq with full sovereignty and makes its membership in the League a certainty this year, has been opposed by the two Parties of extreme nationalism; for the British still retain a foothold in Iraq for the protection of their interests, principally the oil of Mosul and the air base, already established near Baghdad, in the line of imperial communications.

What is significant in this whole business of adjusting the rights of a great and a minor power, however, is that the ten years of a mandate tempered by treaties, have been a schooling in diplomacy, as well as in economy and common sense for both parties. The Iraqis will appreciate the security of their frontiers in the north and in the south, while continuing to cultivate the friendship of the Turks and the Wahhabis, and will not look with disdain upon the revenues of the oil fields; while the British, renouncing the diplomacy of creating dangers in frontier disputes to acquire advantages in treaties—a diplomacy that has lost its mask if not also its cunning—can not but feel satisfaction in the security of a pipe line between Mosul and Haifa and an air base in Hunaidi, which the Iraq Government must also safeguard and protect. Other lessons have been learned. The British will no longer, I think, make any material sacrifices for the mere maintenance of their prestige in an Oriental country; and the Iraqis will no longer indulge in the general de-

nunciation, at the expense of cutting their own throats, of everything British or European.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this present stage in the political development of Iraq, is due entirely to the opposition of the extreme nationalists; for, without attempting to discount their own contribution, it must also be stated that were they, through their committees, in direct charge of the negotiations with the British Government, the success would not have been achieved in such a measure and within such a short period of time. There is then another factor, which in a sense is more important. Indeed, the head of a state, especially in the Orient, can still direct or overcome certain tendencies of good or evil; and when the state is still in the making, like Iraq, the dangers and the prospects are intensified. He who is at the helm can either make or mar, can become a savior or a destroyer.

Now, King Faisal's reign did not have an auspicious beginning. The country was against him—its sufferance for the crown given under various means of pressure merits little or no consideration—and his only real friends were the British. He came to Iraq, and he stepped up to the throne of Iraq under great disadvantages; and while he knew the course he had to take, he saw the difficulties he had to surmount before he could get to the head of the road. He could not wear a crown that was to be forever dependent upon a foreign power; and he could not be so ungrateful as to ask his people, even if he could have led them at that time, to free the crown from its shackling favor. His problem was singular; but he saw it clearly and he faced it with dignity, sincerity, and courage.

How to retain the friendship of the British while striving to attain the confidence of the people of Iraq, that was King Faisal's problem when he came to the throne. Deftly and resolutely, with pliancy and savoir-faire, alternately open-minded and open-hearted—if not always convincing, he is always prepossessing—he set himself to the task of solving this problem; and that it took him but ten years to do so, considering the seriousness of its implications, national and international, is indeed praiseworthy. While the opposition was forging weapons against the mandate, he went his way, through treaty after treaty, to the point which he and the opposition held in common. Had he surrendered entirely to it, he would certainly have lost the opportunity to serve its purpose. By the same

token, had he been more mindful of British favor, he would not have had the ghost of a chance to bring about the adjustment that is as favorable to British interests as it is to the national aspirations of his people. As it is, neither the Arabs of Iraq nor the British can justly withhold from him their gratitude and their confidence and support. For the young Kingdom is now free to solve its own problems in the light of its own particular needs; and it is hoped that, with an enlightened parliament, a wise and far-seeing monarch, and a sound system of popular education, it will prove itself quite equal to the task.

II

A similar state of political and national evolution we do not find today, unfortunately, in the other mandated countries, in Syria and Palestine and Trans-Jordan. For although the people of Syria and Palestine, at least, are not inferior to the people of Iraq in education and culture, in social and political development, in national leadership, they are nevertheless still subject to a mandatory power, which is floundering, to say the least, with the very instrument of its authority and realizing, without admitting, the hopelessness of the venture.

In Syria the situation does not justify much optimism. What the French have done in twelve years in dividing and constitutionalizing the divisions of the country, it will take twenty-five years, under a favorable settled condition, to undo. Whatever were the faults of the British in Iraq, for instance, they did not cut it up into different independent states, when they could have done so. Indeed, they could have created a Christian state in Mosul as the French did in Mt. Lebanon; they could have separated Basrah and invested it with a sham independence as the French did with the country north of Lebanon, that strip of coast between Tripoli and Alexandretta, which was called the Alawite State; and they could have allowed the Kurds to secede and be as free to have any government they liked, or no government at all, as the Druse in the south of Syria.

Whatever good the French have done in their mandated territory, conceding that such good would not have been possible without them, as the building of roads, for instance, and the settlement of frontier questions, can not efface the evil of dividing the country and deepening wherever it was possible the breach between its

people in the name of religion and sectarianism. Even in the Lebanon Republic sectarianism is the constitutional basis of representation in the Legislative Assembly; and this Republic, whose Constitution is Paris-made, is body and soul, even as its ardent apologists will tell you, under the thumb of the High Commissioner. If there was a wish to make it non-sectarian, progressive, and to give it a freer native hand, neither the Legislative Assembly nor the Government nor the people, I am sure, would protest. But there it is a Jesuitical creation, a twentieth-century engine with an eighteenth-century boiler; and when the explosion takes place, it will not be the fault of the French—Oh, no! It will be attributed to native incompetency, and the League of Nations will be told that the Lebanese are not yet fit for self-government.

And what have the French done in Syria during the past ten years, or since the mandate was issued? They have set up and changed three provisional governments in the effort to discharge the first duty⁵ imposed upon them by the League. But the mandate has been in force since the summer of 1922, and Syria is still without an organic law, without a constitutional government. To be in default seven years and be still struggling with the problem of their first obligation, is not a record that can be conscientiously recommended. If a minor power, holding this mandate, had shown no better record in ten years, the League, it is not unreasonable to suppose, would have relieved it of its responsibility.

It must be said that France has contributed substantially to her own difficulties in Syria by antagonizing the forces of nationalism and allying herself with the forces of reaction. Not one of the three provisional governments referred to commanded the confidence of the country, or was sufficiently popular to be able to act as an intermediary between the French and their antagonists. On the contrary, the head of every provisional government—such is the innate defect of the heritage of bureaucratic fidelity—was more royal than the king, which was most unfortunate both to the nationalists and the French. For if Syria, like Iraq, had a responsible head, responsible primarily to the country and not unconscious of his other responsibility, the negotiations for a treaty to take the

⁵The First Article of the Mandate says that "the Mandatory Power shall frame, within a period of three years from the coming into force of this mandate, an organic law for Syria and Mt. Lebanon."

place of the mandate would have been equally successful.

But France is still hopeful and undaunted. The present High Commissioner, the patient and silent Ponsot, who has been struggling for the past five years with the First Article of the Mandate, may yet, by a happy chance, succeed. A national government in Damascus and a Franco-Syrian treaty may soon become a reality more through the pressure of circumstance,—the development, for instance, in Iraq—than any inspiration of his own or of the Quay d' Orsay.

His record up to the present time consists chiefly of several deadlocks followed by trips to Paris. In the spring of 1928 the Syrian Constituent Assembly drafted a constitution, six clauses of which, he declared, were unacceptable;⁶ and in the repeated conferences between him and the leaders of the Assembly, he could not persuade them to accept his views. To Paris then for consultation. But he returned as he went: the Quay d'Orsay was inexorable. The nationalists at that juncture offered a compromise, which seemed most reasonable. They were willing to modify the clause about a united Syria and to strike out of the constitution the other five clauses on condition that they be embodied in the treaty that was to be concluded with France. But the treaty-idea was not relished at that time by the French Government, who insisted on the elimination of the six clauses, because, it was argued they made its position as a mandatory untenable. The mandate, the nationalists replied, is a temporary agreement, while the constitution is a permanent document and should contain, or exact as a pledge, the necessary provisions for safeguarding the rights of Syria as an independent state. But the mandate is in force, the French rebutted, and it should have priority over a document that is still under negotiations: the mandate must be unconditionally recognized. The nationalist said, no; and the Constituent Assembly was prorogued *sine die*.

During the year that followed the country was on the verge of another political disturbance. Damascus closed its shops in protest with the nationalists against the action of the High Commis-

⁶The six clauses referred to (1) the unity of Syria, or all the lands within the natural pre-war boundary of the country, (2) the organization of a national army, (3) the appointment of diplomatic representatives abroad, (4) the granting of pardons and general amnesty, (5) the declaration of martial law, and (6) the right of negotiating treaties with foreign powers.

sioner, resolutions were adopted to stand fast against the mandate, threats were made to lay the draft constitution before the League of Nations, and the newspapers began to preach a campaign of civil disobedience. Very soon after that, in April, Monsieur Ponsot returned from Paris to announce the birth of the Syrian Republic. His coming this time was hailed with expectation.

But he had in his portfolio, alas, four Paris-made constitutions instead of one; and when they were officially published (May 22, 1930), there was joy in Geneva and Paris and there were lamentations in Damascus and Aleppo. Even America was hasty in hailing a sister republic; the *New York Times*, itself, offering an orison and confusing Lebanon with Syria, rejoiced to see "the goodly cedar" put forth boughs again and the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled.

But the "goodly cedar" was not included in the Syrian Republic; nor were the other States—the Alawite, the Druse Mountain, and the autonomous city of Alexandretta—each of which had a constitution of its own! The unity of Syria was reduced to the Four Cities and the Desert.⁷ But the nationalists did not capitulate, and it did not take Monsieur Ponsot long to realize that he had to make another trip to Paris. It was a long trip this time, for it entailed a visit to Geneva. Meanwhile there were whispers, which certainly reached the Quay d'Orsay, that the nationalists were weakening and that the talk, started in Paris, of making King Faisal King of both Syria and Iraq, brought confusion to their councils and created a split in their ranks.

That is why perhaps Monsieur Ponsot returned this time with more heart than ever. His proclamation the day after his arrival (November, 1931) was the sensation of his career. The most unpopular of provisional governments, Tajedin Hasani's, was abolished—there was rejoicing for a spell in the Four Cities for that—a day was set for the election of a national assembly, and an administrative council, made up of Francophile timber including the heads of all the defunct provisional governments and only one nationalist, the President of the Group Hashem Bey Attasi, was appointed by the High Commissioner to take charge of affairs under

⁷Damascus, Hims, Hama, and Aleppo are the four leading cities of Syria. The Arabs of the deserts, principally the Ruwallas and the 'Aneizas are now taking an active interest in politics; the Ruwallas under Nuri Sha'lan are pro-French, while the 'Anezas and their allies, under the leadership of Ibn Muhaid, are nationalists.

his direct supervision during the said election. In reality it was a government *ad interim* by the mandatory and its henchmen, who assured the country that the elections would be free of all official and non-official interference, of coercion, intimidation, and every other unlawful means of persuasion.

But the 5th of January, 1932, was not a feather in the cap of Monsieur Ponsot. It was a day of riots at the polls and later in the streets, the police, the city watchmen, and the French troops participating. Tanks and machine guns were also used to disperse the crowds and reestablish order. In the two principal cities, Damascus and Aleppo, the casualties were twelve dead and about thirty wounded. The elections were discontinued. Outside the big cities, however, they were, with one or two exceptions, peaceful and they resulted in the defeat of most of the nationalist candidates. In Aleppo, too, when they were repeated the following month, after the authorities had sentenced to forced absence one of the nationalist leaders and imprisoned three others, the nationalists were defeated by their opponents. But in Damascus, Hama, and a few other places the elections were postponed indefinitely.

These, very briefly, are the facts. But who is responsible for the riots and the resulting bloodshed? That the French authorities were in full control on that day, is beyond question. That the electoral law was published the previous week by all the newspapers, and that the secondary electors knew what were their rights and their duties, is also true. According to a clause in the electoral law, the official at the poll has to open the ballot box for the secondary electors, show them that it is empty, and then seal it in their presence before they place in it their ballots. In connection with this rule, the truth of the incident in Damascus that precipitated the first riot, seems to be well established. One of the electors, a nationalist, asked that the ballot box be opened and shown and then sealed, according to the law, before the vote is taken. This was refused—"these are the boxes and these are our orders," said the official—and the man was roughly handled and forced out of the place by the police.

According to the nationalists, this is one of the many like incidents that took place in Damascus, in Aleppo, and in other cities—even at one of the polls of the Arabs of the desert. They accuse the Government and its henchmen of packing the ballot boxes with

the names of their own candidates and sending them sealed—loaded dice!—to the polls. On the other hand, the Government accuses the nationalists of having deliberately precipitated the riots, because they were not certain of winning the election as they did in the spring of 1928. At the present writing, Monsieur Ponsot, still silent and patient, stands in midstream between a blood-bespattered election that is only half finished and a country that is still in the parturient pains of the birth of a republic. May the divinity of circumstance, working through Baghdad or Paris or Geneva, be of favor—and the sooner the better.⁸

III

There may be something, too, up the sleeve of the said Divinity to favor Palestine. For the situation there, after the late Labor Government had given it a good airing and then made a mess of the various means of an attempted solution, is not much better than it was prior to August, 1929. The chance of a rapprochement between the Arabs and the Zionists was destroyed by Mr. Mac Donald in his letter to Dr. Weizmann explaining—in reality disclaiming—the Passfield White Paper. Since then the Zionists have been recuperating; and the upheaval of their last general conference at Basel is as significant as its reaffirmations. It may mean, in the world of Jewry, a more solid front; but it also reflects the danger of the situation in Palestine. For Zionism there is going through a crisis, economic and agricultural, which is unprecedented in the last ten years of its history, and the factional forces, within the general frame, are becoming more agitated and more centrifugal. The attempt to reënforce the frame from without, may partly succeed; morally and politically it is possible; but financially—another \$5,000,000,000. for temporary relief from America, for instance,—there is little or no hope. The Arabs, however, are no longer laboring under any illusion. Their press may be cocksure of the bankruptcy of Zionism in Palestine, but their leaders are taking nothing for granted.

⁸In electing the representatives there was a compromise between the Mandatory Government and the nationalists, and the president—the first president of the Syrian Republic, Mohammed Bey Ali al-'Abed—was also a compromise candidate. He is one of the richest men in Syria and was once Turkish Ambassador in Washington.

The Grand Mufti, Hajj Amin ul-Husaini, looms bigger and stronger today, in spite of the opposition of the moderates under the leadership of the Mayor of Jerusalem, Ragheb Bey Nashashiby. But just as every Zionist of whatever shade is for a national home in Palestine, so every Arab, whether moderate or extremist, is anti-Zionist. Local politics, personal ambition and family rivalries have much to do with the dissension. Aside from these, who of the two leaders is better at the helm depends upon the circumstances surrounding the issue. After the Passfield White Paper, the leadership of Ragheb Bey would have been more practical and beneficial; for he could speak the language and command the forces of peace which the Zionists would understand and respect. But after the letter of Premier Mac Donald to Dr. Weizmann, or when the issue calls for fighting strength and maneuvering skill, Hajj Amin is the man.

But London, where both of these leaders are known, has a different opinion; and I deem it my duty, as an Oriental who holds out modestly a rushlight of understanding, to correct it. In political circles there I heard it said that the Grand Mufti and the other Arab leaders, excepting Ragheb Bey Nashashiby, are what they call "duds." The Mufti himself is like a village preacher who still attacks from his pulpit the Darwinian theory. But Ragheb Bey is modern and progressive. This is partly true. Ragheb Bey is cosmopolitan, and he cuts more ice in London than a turbaned Hajji or a shaikh of Al-Azhar. But he can also be more misleading. He can be a Darwinian in London, if that will help London to better appreciate his political point of view; and he can be in Jerusalem even a revisionist when there is hope in it for an understanding with the Jews: but in neither instance does he yield aught of the integrity of his faith. This inconsistency on the surface is misleading; as a bit of color in his cosmopolitanism it is attractive but not convincing. And in the East, where a certain indelibility, though it conceal a sore spot, is still considered a virtue in leadership, it is even compromising.

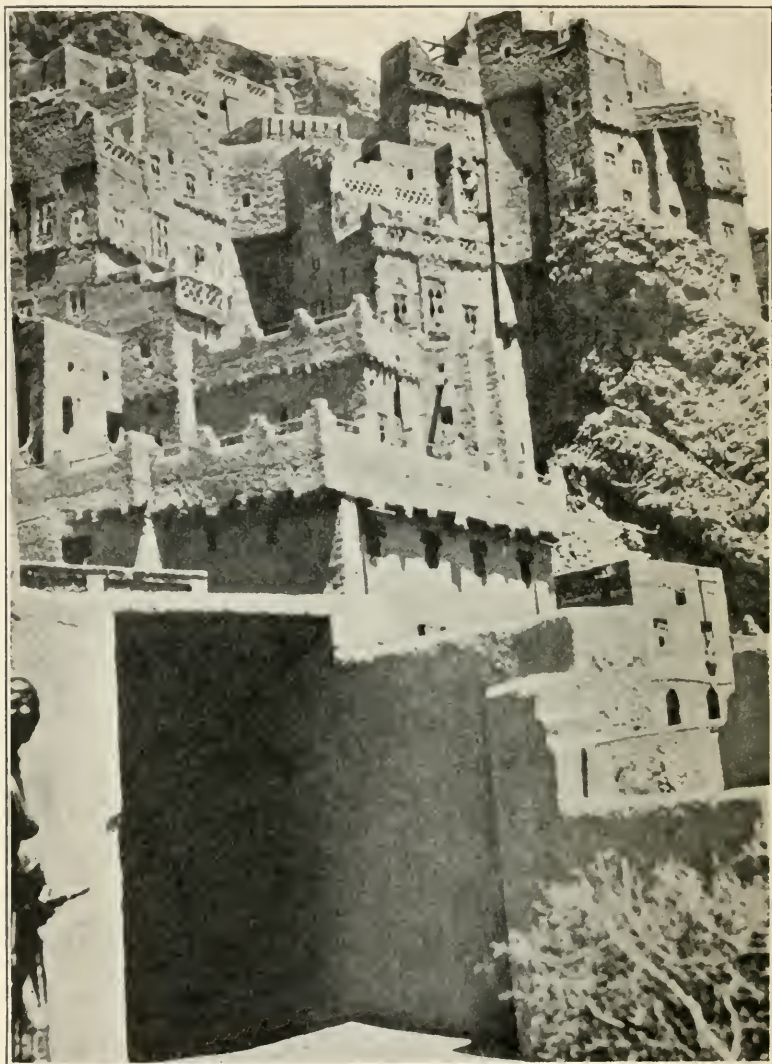
Be it moreover remembered that the East is emotional and that religion is still its strongest emotion. Given two equally strong men, therefore, especially in certain parts of the Muslem world, the one that wears a turban has more pull—invisible like the moon's—than the one in a hat or a fez. I hold no brief for the turbaned gentry; I know what they are on the whole: a bad man in a turban can

bring misery and destruction to a whole community, to a nation. But a strong and honest man in a *jubbah* and turban—London may find him a bit gauche, a bit stiff, pompous perhaps and otherwise inexpressive, intellectually at an ebb, socially impossible, even outlandish. He, too, to London is misleading on the surface, and a little under the surface. But instead of two truths, he has a single mind with a dozen lights—native torches, as it were,—for its supreme purpose. These lights did not shine in London, and the Grand Mufti was classed among “duds.”

But he has pulling power, this man; and that in politics, high or low, is not to be contemned. His recent outstanding achievement is the General Muslem Conference held in Jerusalem last December. It was feared, it was opposed: certain European powers tried to upset it; but he pulled it through. From every part of the Muslem world came representatives with grievances that were publicly expressed and others that were privately discussed and recorded. The programme of the Conference encompassed all the vital needs, religious and cultural, educational and industrial, social and political, of the Muslems of the world. From a university to be established in Jerusalem to the question of the Hejaz Railway, is a scope; the defense of the holy places, a bureau of propaganda and a national fund, are other subjects; but over and underlying all is the question of combatting and overcoming Zionism in Palestine. Here are the Arabs' front-line trenches, and Hajj Amin-ul-Husaini is the chief recruiting and commandeering officer. There should be a base of supplies, he made it understood, in every Muslem country. But Ibn Sa'oud, before him, once tried the Muslem world;⁹ and it remains to be seen whether Hajj Amin will be more successful. The Jerusalem Conference, morally and to a certain extent politically, was a success; and even within its realities it is bound to add to the difficulties of both the British and the Zionists in Palestine. Outside pressure is seldom ineffective.

But the Arabs of Palestine are not depending wholly upon outside pressure. At the General Palestine Conference held in Nablus last September resolutions were passed (1) to adopt the Ghandi policy of non-cooperation and civil disobedience; (2) to promote native industry by boycotting Jewish and European goods; (3) to

⁹A General Muslem Conference was held in Mecca in the summer of 1926, under the auspices of King Ibn Sa'oud.



Courtesy of the National Geographic Magazine

SKYSCRAPERS IN A LITTLE TOWN IN SOUTHWESTERN ARABIA

oppose any move for an understanding with the Jews of Palestine so long as Zionism continues to menace the national rights and aspirations of the Arabs; (4) to continue the campaign for general and permanent contributions to the national fund; (5) to stop selling land to the Jews, and (6) to organize local committees throughout the country for the effective enforcement of these resolutions.

But the question of a national fund, at both Conferences, was paramount; and the representatives at the Jerusalem Conference pledged themselves to organize branch committees in their respective countries to carry on the campaign for general permanent contributions. This fund is to be used, not only for the purpose of propaganda, but also to help the Arab farmer, by loan or purchase, and thus prevent him from selling in sheer need his land to the Jews.

As for the British, their position in Palestine is becoming more untenable than ever. Events are moving fast, and the press of circumstances is reaching to the core of the problem. Indeed, it is hard to see how the British Government, now that the mandate in Iraq is abolished, can consistently uphold, to say nothing of the hopeless task of enforcing, a mandate in Palestine. But already there are alarms and excursions that presage something dramatic. Diplomacy is moving slowly down stage to publish a secret long withheld. The British are evidently tired of the Arabs and the Jews, and their real interests in Palestine are centered in Haifa, or the end of the pipe line of the oil of Mosul and the terminus of a contemplated railroad across the desert. There may be, too, an air base in the line of imperial communications.

Now, if any one can adequately protect these interests and is willing to shoulder the troubles of Arab and Jew—and is acceptable in this capacity to his neighbors, to Egypt and Syria and Ibn Sa'oud and Mustapha Kemal, even if he is only partly acceptable—Great Britain may be willing to sign the deed and wash her hands of "the sacred trust of civilization." A king! The Holy Land for a king! And Abbas Helmi, the ex-Khedive of Egypt, has of late been going up and down the world, visiting Angora, Syria, Jerusalem, Geneva; and Lord Reading came on a pilgrimage to Palestine and there met by chance the ex-Khedive; and the High Commissioner for Palestine went to Cairo to see his Colleague there and incidentally pay his respects to King Fuad; and the Premier of Egypt Sidki Pasha went to Beirut, the seat of the French High Commissioner,

for no reason of health or over-work—all these innocent peregrinations within the months of January and February of 1932. That is why I say events are moving fast in Palestine, as well as in Iraq.

IV

Beyond Palestine and in the Peninsula there is less immobility than usual, but little or no speed. In Trans-Jordan as well as in the States along the coast of the Persian Gulf, i.e., Kuwait, Bahrain, Trucial Oman, and Mascat, the relations of the British Government with the native rulers is, as the address from the throne might truly say, peaceful and friendly. There is an awakening among the people, however, which is finding expression in a demand for more schools, but is not yet strong enough as an element of protest against the "peaceful and friendly" relations between the controlling power and the dependent, the practically nominal native sovereigns. This is particularly true of Trans-Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain, where the progress in popular education is somewhat compensating for the political backwardness of the state. Trans-Jordan itself, an artificial creation of the post-war politics of the Allies, might be the first to be affected by any eventful change in Palestine or any unexpected development in the politics of King Ibn Sa'oud.

Of the other States along the coasts of Arabia, Hadhramout is in the same category with Mascat, and the Protectorates around Aden are still the subject of dispute, of open hostility between the British and the independent ruler of the Yaman, the Imam Yahya. The dream of extending Yaman sovereignty to what is considered its natural boundary to the south and southeast, to Aden and Hadhramout, is still cherished by the Imam. But his recent activities have been more to the north and there was fear at one time of a clash with King Ibn Sa'oud. How the dispute was settled deserves to be broadcast throughout the world. To the powers of Europe, to the League of Nations, to all those who are working for universal peace, an Arab ruler has set an example unique in history. Let me tell briefly of this otherwise insignificant affair.

The Idrisi territory, Asir, along the coast of the Red Sea, between the Yaman and the Hejaz, has been shrinking for the past eight years in both directions. The Imam Yahya invaded and occupied a section of it up to Midi; the Wahhabis had long before oc-

cupied Abha and the mountains around it; and the Saiyed Hasan ul-Idrisi, who feared the further encroachment of the Imam, concluded with King Ibn Sa'oud a treaty (October, 1926), which placed under that king's protection what he still held of Asir. Since then the relations between the two independent rulers, Ibn Sa'oud and the Imam, have been on the whole friendly; but last year the Yaman soldiers occupied a mountain called 'Aru, which was claimed by the Asiris to be of Asir and by the Yamanis as Yaman territory. The Wahhabi soldiers, therefore, to protect the rights of the Idrisi, moved upon the soldiers of the Imam Yahya, and there was an encounter. The Imam protested to Ibn Sa'oud, and after an exchange of notes, they agreed to have a joint commission of Najdis and Yamanis meet in Asir, investigate the case, and decide to whom Mt. 'Aru belonged.

The commission met, investigated, and disagreed. Whereupon the Imam wrote to his representatives saying that he was willing to have Ibn Sa'oud himself decide the case and that he would accept his decision whatever it be. Ibn Sa'oud was overcome. "How can I," he said, "when my opponent appeals to me, decide in my own favor? No, the Imam Yahya can not be more generous than Ibn Sa'oud. Mt. 'Aru is of the territory of the Yaman, and we are all Arabs. It makes no difference if it changes hands." Civilized Europe and America, please note.

King Abd ul-Aziz ibn Sa'oud and the Imam Yahya ibn Hamid ud-Din, the rulers respectively of the United Kingdom of the Hejaz and Najd and of the Yaman, are the two most prominent personalities in the Peninsula today. They are both expansionists with a Pan-Arab dream; they are both religious leaders of their respective sects, the Wahhabis and the Zaidis, and they are both now adopting a policy of peaceful penetration. Even though independent in their sovereignty, however, they both still depend more or less upon the good-will of the British Government.

But there is a marked difference in their personal traits. The Imam is austere and unbending, taciturn and secretive; King Abd' ul-Aziz is breezy and engaging, outspoken and direct; the Imam is narrow and exclusive in his religious attitude, even towards non-Zaidi Muslims, King Abd'ul-Aziz can be tolerant and hospitable; the Imam is devious and hesitating in making and executing his plans, King Abd'ul-Aziz is slow in planning and quick in execu-

tion: but the Imam is strong in his mountain isolation, while Ibn Sa'oud's power in a realm that reaches from sea to sea, including vast desert spaces, has in it an inherent weakness.

There is another difference arising out of the reactionary and often selfish attitude of that somewhat privileged class in the realm of both; namely, the *saiyeds* of the Yaman and the *ulema* of Najd. The Imam in dealing with the *saiyeds* is not so independent and so sure, so alternately pliant and inexorable according to the need of the moment, and consequently not so successful as King Ibn Sa'oud is with his *ulema*. This may be one reason why the Pan-Arabism of the former is more religious than racial, while that of the latter is fast becoming more racial than religious.

These two rulers, who in their rivalry for power have come so close to each other in Asir, have realized, like all the other leaders in the Arab world, the deep truth of the lesson of the last ten years—salvation through solidarity. Indeed, only by a united front can they hold their own and be in friendly relations with their neighbors to the north, the Turks, and to the east, the Persians, as well as with the European powers, especially Great Britain and France and Italy, who still exercise an influence in their affairs. But only by organizing their forces and laying the foundations of peace among themselves through mutual good-will and understanding, can they show a united front.

The settlement of the Mt. 'Aru question is an example of how this is being done: the meeting of King Faisal and King Ibn Sa'oud in the winter of 1930 and the subsequent treaty of peace and friendship between Najd and Iraq, is another; and not less significant are the official visits in the summer of 1931 of an Iraq delegation to San'a and another headed by the Prime Minister Nouri Pasha Sa'id to Mecca for the purpose of discussing with the Imam Yahya and King Ibn Sa'oud the preliminaries of an Arab federation.

Aside from these official activities, the popular interest, which is gaining in extension and intensity day by day, is beginning to crystallize and to have a voice and a course of procedure. After the General Muslim Conference previously referred to, a group of Arabs, Muslims and Christians from Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, and the Peninsula, held a meeting in Jerusalem on the 13th of December, 1931, and the following pledge was taken under oath by every one present:

First —To uphold the integrity of Arabia as a nation and to recognize no divisions therein.

Second—To direct the efforts in every Arab State towards the one goal of complete independence and complete unity, and to oppose every movement and every idea that has the tendency of making paramount local and divisional politics.

Third —To oppose colonization to the utmost in every form, because it is inconsistent with the dignity and the supreme purpose of the Arab nation.

A resolution was also adopted to hold in the very near future a Pan-Arab convention.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the success of the movement depends entirely upon the Arabs themselves. For Great Britain and France, even when all the mandates are abolished, will still have, as I have shown, interests in the country; and the right to safeguard them, even though circumscribed by treaties, can be invoked even at the instance of the least fear and suspicion.

Frankly, the complete success of the Pan-Arab movement, whether it results in a single empire or in a federation of states or kingdoms, depends upon the honest intention and the good-will of Great Britain and France, as well as upon the national and progressive spirit of the Arabs themselves. Moreover, the economic and educational factors are just as essential as the political. It may be said, therefore, that complete success depends upon five principal points:

1. The control of the nomad tribes and the establishment of law and order among them through the urbanizing process instituted by King Ibn Sa'oud. In other words, to transform the nomad population into peasants and make them producing and law-abiding citizens.

2. The withdrawal from the various petty States of so-called British protection, the discontinuance of the corruptive and nefarious system of stipends, and the transfer of the agreements the British Government has with the different small rulers along the coast of the Persian Gulf to Ibn Sa'oud and around Aden to the Imam Yahya, who will pledge themselves to protect British interests on the two routes to India, that is to say across the desert and through the Gulf and Red Sea.

3. The granting by the sovereign rulers of economic conces-

sions to mixed corporations composed of foreigners and natives, the foreigners to furnish also the technical knowledge, where it is needed, for the development of the resources of the country, provided that such foreign capital and technical skill are free from imperialistic interests and political control.

4. The establishment of national schools with a uniform liberal programme of education in the Peninsula as well as in the northern territories.

5. The inclusion in the treaties with the northern States, i.e., Iraq and Syria and Palestine, of a clause sanctioning the unity of these States with each other and with the other States in the Peninsula, provided such unity does not affect any previous commitment regarding the interests of the other signatory powers.

The first and the fourth of these five points—the urbanizing of the Beduin population and the national schools—have already been started and are being continued with considerable success.

The second and the fifth—the change in British policy in the Peninsula and the unity-clause in the treaties—must come inevitably, logically, since Great Britain and France, abandoning the mandate, must rely upon the principle of reciprocity for safeguarding their interests and maintaining their prestige in the Near East.

The third point—the granting of concessions—depends upon the fulfilment of the second and the fifth. That is to say, if the interested Powers, Great Britain and France, coöperate with the Arabs for the sake of peace and progress, as well as for reciprocal advantages, instead of impeding and opposing their activities to pacify and unify their country, foreign capital and technical skill for the development of its natural resources will be gladly admitted.

The most important of these points—the control of the nomad population and the national schools—depends wholly upon the Arabs themselves. Neither the French in Syria, for instance, nor the British in Iraq could achieve, in their relations with the Arabs of the northern desert, a fraction of the success of Ibn Sa'oud in Central Arabia; neither of them could fully control the tribes, even when they had to bribe their chiefs; and neither Great Britain nor France was sympathetic, to say the least, to a uniform national system of public education. These must come from within, from the Arabs themselves, and they are now on the path of fulfilment.

The other points must logically, inevitably follow; but let us

hope that they will follow, not as a result of force, but as the natural development of a policy, national and international, that is consistent with the progressive and humanitarian spirit of civilization. After all, this Arab movement is but an expression in Arabic of what has been and is still an expression in English, in French, in German, in Hindustani—an expression of national progress and human development. Upon it depends the future of Arabia, and upon it in a large measure depends the peace of the world. It is in this sense a world-movement and it may be summed up in three words: pacification, unification, education.

LITERARY LIFE IN THE ARABIC PENINSULA

BY TAHHA HUSSEIN.

Translated from the Arabic by Martin Sprengling

ONE MAY in these days present of the land of the Arabs two very different pictures, which nevertheless will both be true. On the one hand it is a part of Asia for long ages named by one name. On the other hand it is composed of countries and climes which differ from each other in their nature, being quite distinct from each other in their geographical, social, political, and religious circumstances. Some of them are level and some are rough; some high and some low; some rich and fertile, some dry and barren; some are inhabited by a sedentary population and some by bedouin. Again some have retained political independence strong or weak, while others are entirely subject to the foreigner. In addition to all this, there are in Arabia those who follow the faith of the Sunnites (orthodox or Catholic Moslems) and hold fast tenaciously to the tenets of the Moslem Church Fathers; those who adhere to the creed of the Shiah (the greatest body of schismatics in Islam, addicted to a peculiar reverence for Mohammed's son-in-law, Ali, and his descendants and to a peculiar philosophy of politico-religious life); and those who follow the Sufic form of religious life (Mohammedan mysticism with rites to induce trances). Again there are some who lead the life of ordinary Moslems in other Islamic lands and some who are totally ignorant of Islam and are immersed in a sort of bedouinism most similar to that which the ancient Arabic poets describe as the life of the pre-Islamic Arabs, who used to worship idols and trees before the appearance of Islam.

All this you may find in the land of the Arabs. So you can scarcely say truthfully that this land has any unity at all or that it is in any wise easy to speak of it and its literature as one may speak of any other country of the Arabic East. You can talk about Egypt and Syria and Tunis and Algiers and describe the social, political, cultural, and religious life of any one of these without appreciable difficulty. For each of these lands has its unity, geographical, political, and in language, and this unity enables you to describe such a country at least approximately, though it may not be possible in every detail. But the land of the Arabs or the peninsula of Arabia,

as the geographers call it, has no such unity. What you may say about the Hejaz will not be true about Yemen, and what you may say about the affairs of Nejd will not hold good with regard to Tihama.¹ There is in it not one country, but a number of countries and climes.

This picture of the land of the Arabs which I now sketch for you is very like the picture of this same land which you will find in pre-Islamic poetry, when all these regions were united in nothing but name, when they differed from each other in language and dialect and in political, social, and religious organization according to the difference of countries and climes, when the camel, the only means of communication, was not able to eliminate the separateness that marked off these climes from each other. These regions continue today as they were before Islam, the distances between them not eliminated, not brought nearer to each other by railroads, no appreciable impression made upon them by the use of the telegraph which is still rare, nor by the passage of steamships along their coasts in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf. Arabia is in its ancient condition nearly isolated from the outside world, and it is likewise in its ancient condition, with scarcely any permanent connection existing between its inner divisions. It is, indeed, strange, how very similar is its political situation after the great war to its political situation in the fifth and sixth Christian centuries, before Islam had appeared and established a firm bond of union between it and the lands of the Near and Middle East.

The boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula in the fifth and sixth Christian centuries adjoined the Byzantine Empire, and the result of this contiguity was that political relations were established between the Ghassanian princes² and the Constantinopolitan Caesars similar to the relations of the protectorates in this modern age.

What sort of thing is now the principality of Transjordan? It is the principality of the ancient Ghassanians; in it are a few cities with a scanty portion of settled inhabitants, and in it is a strong and rich bedouin element: at their head is a prince, who was a Ghassanian before Islam, and who is now a Hashimite. This principality before Islam was subject to the protectorate of Constantinople and it is now subject to the protectorate of London.

¹The low coast lands between Yemen, Asir, and Hejaz, and the Red Sea.

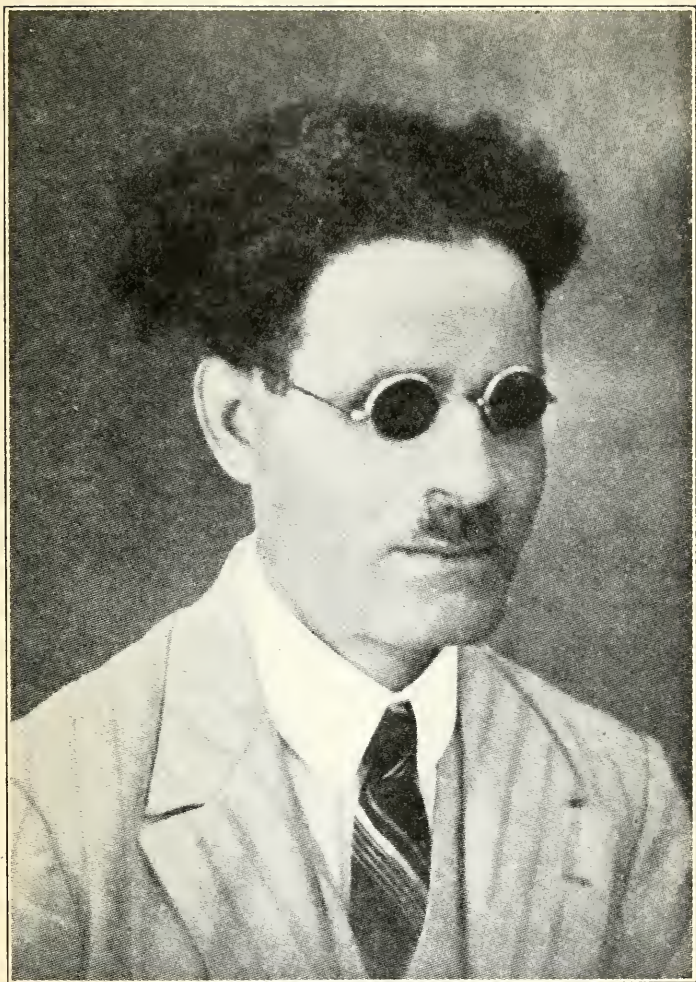
²These were chieftains and presently princes of the Arabs in Transjordan and the western half of the Syrian Desert.

On the Iraq side the boundaries of the peninsula were contiguous to Persia. In this section there arose an Arabic principality, which the Chosroes of Persia took under their wing, while it in turn guarded the limits of the Sassanian empire against the raids of the bedouin. Now there is established in it an Arabian kingdom, at whose head is no longer a Lakhmid, as of yore, but a Hashimite. And it is no longer the Persians, who exercise a protectorate over it, but the English.

The country of Yemen, with the adjoining southern regions within the peninsula, was in the fifth and sixth century an area of contention between Persia and Eastern Rome. It was subject to Rome through the mediation of the Abyssinians, or it was subject to Persia in its own right, or it would snatch a tenuous bit of independence while it continued to be a bone of contention between these two. It is now, as formerly it was, in part subject, along the coast, to the control of the English in their own name, and in part independent, but a bone of contention and rivalry between the power of England and the power of Italy.

The names of the powers exercising or coveting a protectorate over the borders of the peninsula have changed, and something of the forms of the protectorate and the desire for it have changed. But the nature of things has not changed, and the reasons for the protectorate and the covetousness have not changed. Foreign powers keep watch over the borders of the Arabian peninsula either for fear of the bedouin or for the expansion of commercial influence or for both reasons together. And the way in which the Arabs themselves understand the bond between themselves and the foreigners has not changed. It rests in the twentieth century, as it did in the fifth and the sixth, upon the need for goods and the fear of power. Whatever foreign power in the neighborhood of the peninsula was strongest and richest, that power has ever been the influential master among these folk.

The heart and interior of the peninsula likewise has changed but little. Quite independent bedouin make a show of submission or obedience to emirs of settled territory through covetousness or terror or for fear and cupidity together. There is in this respect no difference between the Imam of Sanaa in the Yemen today and a king of Himyar in ancient times. He has governmental authority centered in a capital in settled territory, but the people of the desert



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are independent and submit to him only in the measure in which they fear him or desire his gifts. And it is just the same in Nejd and Tihama and the Hejaz. This is one of the two pictures to which I alluded in the beginning of this section.

The second picture depicts the land of the Arabs insofar as it is in certain respects, something resembling a unity. The established religion for this land is Islam. The established language for this land is the language of the Koran. And the established culture in this land is the ancient Islamic culture.

Hence, however much the inhabitants of the Arabic peninsula may differ in their geographical habitat, in their political organization, in their religious denomination, in their relations with foreign powers, and in their specific dialects, they are all Moslems, they all write the language of the Koran when they write at all, and they think and live about as the Moslem used to think and live before any bond of connection was established between him and the Europeans and Americans. From this point of view the student of culture in Arabic lands may sum it up in a single term as though he were speaking of one people, with the proviso that he must not lose sight of certain specific qualifications which circumscribe certain of its territories and establish for their culture attributes not applicable to the culture of other of its regions.

But a statement about literary culture in the peninsula of Arabia makes it necessary that another difficult problem be broached before we may venture into the matter itself. The land of the Arabs is the cradle of ancient Arabic culture. In its northern and central section arose pre-Islamic (pagan) poetry and in the Hejaz appeared the Koran. From the Hejaz and Nejd and Tihama spread the Arabic language and whatever of religion and culture it carried with it to the lands of the Near East. (This ancient Arabia) flourished most abundantly and remained a homeland for unmixed Arabic culture throughout the first century of the Hijra (the Mohammedan Era, which begins 622 A.D.) The great poets of the Omayyad age were all either bedouin or citizens of the Hejaz and Nejd. And although in the Abbasid era Iraq came to occupy a position of marked preëminence and there arose in it a great group of poets some of whom were of Persian extraction and others of that mixed Semitic stock which was scattered through Iraq and Mesopotamia and Syria, yet there remained in the desert distin-

guished poets who continued to eulogize the caliphs and viziers of Baghdad until the end of the third century of the Hijra.

Then the cultural bond was nearly or wholly severed between the Peninsula of the Arabs and the other lands of the Arabic East, and Arabia relapsed into the isolation which had characterized it before the advent of Islam, complete in regard to culture and extensive in regard to political and other manifestations of life. And what was the reason for this isolation, the result of which was that this land which had been the source of illumination for the Islamic East became the home of barbarism and injustice—that this land, which had been the cradle of the Arabic language and of Arabic literature became the least distinguished of Islamic lands in literature, language, and religion, not to speak of other arts and sciences?

The answer to this question is not difficult. The Omayyad dynasty was pure Arabic, and the caliphs of the sons of Omayya had a special regard for the peninsula of Arabia, because, on the one hand, it was the homeland of the ruling aristocracy, and, on the other, it was the home of the people from which their army was recruited. It is not strange, then, that Arabia should be the most distinguished country of Islam. It was at that time the home of the heads that planned and the hands that worked to uphold the government. It was ruling and the other lands were ruled. When the Abbasid dynasty rose, everything changed, because this dynasty rose on the shoulders of the Persians and by their management of affairs. So Khorasan came to stand in the place of Arabia and became the land which furnished the dynasty with the planning heads, viziers and palace officials, and with the working hands, the army and the employees of the government bureaus. Little by little the Arabs were removed from the army and the bureaus; their country was not the equal of the rest of the Islamic lands in riches and plenty. The dynasty neglected it, and it despaired of the Caliphate. The lines of communication between it and the capital of the Caliphate were neither well ordered nor easy. And so it is not strange that the bond between it and the center of Islamic rule in Baghdad weakened gradually, until it was cut off altogether.

Add to this that the Persian and the Turk, predominant in Baghdad, cared nothing about maintaining any connection between the Arabian peninsula and the settled lands of Islam. And Arabia it-

self had neither riches nor opulence to enable it to live on its own account and to maintain its share of that elevated literary life and civilization which had been freely imported into it in the days of the Omayyads. With all this the peninsula was dragged down, if that expression be permissible, from the general level of Islamic life. The desert bedouin relapsed little by little into barbarism. The settled territory maintained a slender, imitative hold on civilization, literature, and science. But, except for the facts, that the sacred territory is in the peninsula of Arabia and that the Moslems make pilgrimage every year to Mecca and Medina, and that Yemen had importance of its own in the commerce of the Middle Ages, Arabia might well have been wholly neglected and forgotten in the history of the Moslems.

Out of this isolation there developed certain very detrimental influences in the literary life and language of Arabic in general, and in the life of language and letters in the Arabic peninsula in a special way. The close union of the Islamic world with Arabia in the first century of the Moslem era had roused in Arabic literary culture in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt a spirit of bedouinism and desert life, which endowed it with strength and joyousness in word, style, and content from time to time. When this bond was severed, this Arabic literature flourished in settled civilization and luxury; and gradually lost its pure Arabic spirit, until in the end it was transubstantiated into a body in which life scarcely coursed any longer. Its vocabulary was corrupted and abounded in foreign terms; its contents were corrupted with the overrefinement of poets and authors; its style was corrupted and appeared weak and contemptible.

The Arabian peninsula did, indeed, profit in those first centuries from its connections with the surrounding lands. Deputations of Arabs to the settlements of Iraq and Syria and deputations from settled lands to the cities of the Hejaz and Nejd stirred up in the minds of the native Arabs ideas that would not have stirred in their minds, if they had remained in their primeval isolation. To see this one need only glance at the Hejazian love song, the most beautiful love song ever sung in Islam. It is certainly a result of the exchange of gifts between the peninsula of Arabia and the settled territories of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. On the other hand, the outside world itself suffered a quite irreparable loss by the renewal of this isola-

tion. For it is just as certain that the native Arabs of the Hejaz and Nejd did not stop producing literature when the bond between them and the centers of Islamic civilization was severed. There still continued to be among them poets and orators and story-tellers and reciters of poetry. But their poetry and their stories and their literary product in general was no longer being conveyed to the schools of Basra, Kufa, and Baghdad, and was not being studied there, as had been the case in the first centuries. Nor was it being collected in diwans (collections of poetry by authors or subjects). Memory alone preserved it for a few decades. Then the death of the reciters and memorizers carried it away, and it was scattered over the deserts as the sands are scattered by the action of the winds. In addition to this the Arabic language and literature in the peninsula began to change, until from time to time a complete revolution had been accomplished, with neither record nor report of this revolution. Thus it has now become impossible for us to ascertain the true connection between the Arabic dialects now existing in the peninsula and the dialects which were current in it during the course of the first three centuries.

On the other hand, the bonds between the country of the Arabs and the other Islamic countries were never entirely severed. The Moslems went on making pilgrimage every year as of yore, and the Yemenite commercial center was always of importance to the countries of the Mediterranean. Scarcely had attrition worn through the connection between the peninsula and Baghdad, when there arose in its place other connections between the peninsula and Cairo. From the beginning of Fatimid rule (in Egypt 969 A.D.) Cairo had desired that its influence should become supreme in the Hejaz and in Yemen especially. But these connections were more political and religious than cultural and scientific. Those who wish to follow up the history of Arabic literary culture within the peninsula will be able to sense something of it in the cities of the Hejaz and Yemen thanks to the connection between these two countries and Egypt and to the religious preëminence of Mecca and Medina. As for Nejd, its literary life, until about the eighteenth century is totally lost to us.

In any case there are in Arabia two distinct literatures. One of these is tribal, using as a means of expression the tribal tongue, not in the Arabic peninsula alone but in all the Arabic deserts in

Syria and Egypt and North Africa. This literature, even though its language be corrupt, is alive and strong and has its own distinctive value by the fact that it is a truthful mirror to the life of the Arabs in their desert habitat. In its topics, content, and style it is altogether like the ancient Arabic literature which flourished in pre-Islamic times and in the first centuries of the Moslem Era. That is because the life of the Arabs in the desert has not changed in any way whatever. Socially, politically, and materially the life of the tribe is now as it was thirteen centuries ago. It is natural, therefore, that the poetry which depicts this life should be like the poetry which used to depict the ancient life, and that its subject matter should be all that happens between the tribes by way of war and contention, which call forth boast and eulogy, satire and elegy, and whatever variety of pain or pleasure stirs the soul of individuals and calls unto song now in lament, now in love, now in revenge. The Arabic tribal ode (*kasidah*) now, like the ancient Arabic ode begins with a short, simple, moving love song; then it passes at considerable length into description of the camel and the desert; then it arrives at its goal, which may be praise or boast or whatever species of poetry it may be. The same may be said about oratory. For the bedouin now is eloquent, as was the bedouin of old; sweet of speech, a lover of conversation at night and of stories, when he is at peace and at leisure; oratorical and rhetorical, when there is strife or quarrel between him and another.

This Arabic tribal literature is transmitted in the desert by a group of reciters, who inherit it from their fathers and bequeath it to their sons and earn by its recitation their material livelihood and at times a place of distinction. Unfortunately the learned men in the Arabic East pay no attention whatever to this literature, because its language is far from being the language of the Koran. And the literary Moslems are no longer able to see that literary art is an end in itself; with them literature is merely an instrument for religion.

The other literature, copy-literature, seldom found in the desert, is centered habitually in the settlements. It uses as means of expression the language of the Koran. Whereas the tribal literature drew of the Arabic bedouin life a truthful and distinctive picture, this imitative literature is as remote as possible from presenting any picture at all. That is because it is forced and artificial and has no

connection with free nature. It reflects nothing of what poets and authors feel; it merely follows a pattern in which the poets and authors decide they want to compose. There is more hypocrisy than genuineness in it. Then it is imitative; its exponents produce nothing of themselves; they merely imitate in it the people of settled lands, Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqensians. Thus were the men of letters in the cities of Arabia throughout the middle centuries, and so they are now. In fact we can state definitely that the people of the Hejaz borrow their literature from Egypt and Syria especially, even though they may also be influenced by others who visit them for the pilgrimage. Yet the books, which they study in Mecca and Medina are the books which the Egyptians study in the Azhar. The poetry which they read and memorize is the poetry which is read and studied in Egypt and Syria. So, when they undertake to write about the religious sciences, they imitate the Egyptians, as they imitate them in their studies. And when they undertake to compose poetry, they imitate the Egyptians and Syrians.

The people of Yemen, though they belong to a special religious school, are no less under the influence of Egypt than the Hejazians. They certainly follow the Egyptian school in the study of religious and linguistic sciences. They are disciples of the Azhar. They come there to study; then they return home to teach. The strange thing about this is that they continue to study the exact and natural sciences almost in the same way as they were studied in the Azhar before it was touched by modernism early in this century. Astronomy, arithmetic and algebra, mensuration and trigonometry, and natural science, all this is studied there, as it was studied in the Azhar and other institutions of Moslem science, before they had felt the influence of modern European civilization. And the Yemen, also, has a sort of poetry, but it is as imitative as the poetry of the Hejaz, following slavishly the old Egyptian school, before the rise of what now really is Egyptian poetry. You will incur considerable misery, if you undertake to search in Yemen and in the Hejaz at present for poetry of real literary worth; it is merely words strung together, in which much is made of strange and flowery expressions, all of which revolves about insipid topics. What do you think, for example, of four or five poets wasting their time in composing long, thin odes about this topic: Which of the two is better, nearness of spirit to spirit or nearness of body to body?

And you may say the same about the eulogy of the Hejazians and Yemenites, and about their elegy, and their satire and their love-song. Talk, with neither profit in it nor song, a true photograph of what was said in Egypt and Syria fifty years ago!

The eastern half of Arabia is under the influence of Iraq far more than that of Egypt and Syria. In some of the villages situated in tracts of the peninsula which lie close to the Iraq there are poets, and in them there are likewise men learned in language and religion. They are disciples of theologians and poets who flourish in Baghdad and Basra,—and the people of the Iraq were not better off than the Syrians and Egyptians in the days of the Turkish Sultan. It is not strange that their disciples in the Arabian borderlands and in Nejd are mere slavish imitators. It is indeed laughable, when one reads something of what Alūsī publishes as poetry composed by a group of poets of Nejd, who describe in it a spring from which wells warm water, and which people frequent for healing. You will find in this metrical talk neither art nor feeling for beauty, nor vividness, in fact nothing which might arouse in your mind artistic pleasure. It is all heavy, clumsy terms, whose dismal ugliness is increased by the bad meter.

This was the state of literature in the land of the Arabs until very recently, in fact until after the great war:—intensely barren imitation of Egyptians, Syrians, and Iraqensians in the sciences of religion and language and in literature. But the movement of modernization, scientific and literary, appeared in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq during the past century and increased greatly in strength in this century, especially after the war, due to the forcible intermingling which is increasing daily between East and West. Everything came under the influence of this modernizing movement in the East, even the Azhar itself. It was inevitable, therefore, that effects of this movement should extend, also to the land of the Arabs, because the great war shook it as it shook other lands, because it has become linked most intimately to the Europeans after the war, and because the ties between it and the other lands of the Arabic East have likewise increased greatly. Exactly, then, as this land was imitative in its relations to the literature of the Middle Ages, so it is bound now to follow imitatively this new literary development.

In addition to this, however, the student of intellectual and liter-

ary life in Arabia can not overlook a powerful movement, which attracted the eye of the modern world in the East and the West, forced that world to pay close attention to its affairs, and made upon it a momentous impression. Its importance waned somewhat for a space; but in these days it has returned to a position of power, which makes itself felt not in the Arabian peninsula alone, but in its relations to Islamic lands in general, and in its relations with the European nations as well. This is the Wahhabite movement founded by Mohammed son of Abd al-Wahhab, one of the theological leaders of Nejd.

Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab sprang from a family of learned men, jurisprudents and Kadis. He outstripped his father's teaching and journeyed to Iraq, where he heard the lectures of the theologians and jurisprudents of Basra. There he developed his ideas, new and old together, until the displeasure of the people fell upon him, and he was forced to leave Basra. He wanted to go to Syria, but poverty stood between him and that purpose. So he returned to Nejd and remained a while with his father, assisting him and making propaganda for his opinions. Presently his fame rose, and his teaching spread, and people were divided into two parties about him, adherents and opponents. In the end his life was endangered, and he began to appeal to the princes and heads of tribal confederations to offer him refuge and to protect his propaganda. In this way he arrived at the town of Dera'iyyeh. There he appealed to the Emir Mohammed Ibn Sa'oud who offered him refuge, and he swore allegiance to him for aid and succor. From that day forth the new creed became an officially recognized form of religion, sustained by political power, which aided and protected it, and, indeed, spread it broadcast through the regions of Nejd, at times with bland propaganda, but more frequently with war and the sword. Out of this league between religion and politics there arose in Arabia a political dynasty whose power and prestige grew so great that the Turks began to fear it most decidedly and to oppose it with all the means in their power. They accomplished little, and so they asked assistance from the Egyptians, whose government was at that time in the hands of Mohammed Ali the Great. The Egyptians succeeded in weakening this movement, in putting an end to this new state, and thrusting its princes back into the humble condition and anarchic confusion, from which they had emerged. With this

new creed, now, we will have to tarry for a moment, so that we may know what it is and what is the extent of its influence on the intellectual life of Arabia in this modern age.

I have said that this new creed was new and old at one and the same time. The fact is that it is new in relation to its contemporaries, but old in very deed; for it is nothing but a mighty call to sincere and pure Islam, cleansed of all taint of polytheism and idolatry. It is a call to Islam (submission to God) exactly as the prophet had made it, devoted to God alone, and eliminating any mediating instance between God and men. It is a revival of Arabic Islam and the cleansing of it from any impress which paganism or the admixture of non-Arabs had made on it. Indeed, Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab had forbidden to the people of Nejd whatever they had grown accustomed to by way of paganism in their belief and in their life. They had been revering tombs and had accepted certain of the dead as intercessors with God, and they had revered trees and stones and thought them capable of doing good or harm. And they had adopted in their life the habits of the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs, who made their living by raids and warfare. They had forgotten the alms tax and ritual prayers, and religion had become a name of no account.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab wanted to make of these uncouth, polytheistic Arabs a truly Moslem people much as the prophet had done with the people of the Hejaz more than eleven centuries before. It is indeed curious in what measure the appearance of this new creed in Nejd exhibits characteristics that remind one of the appearance of Islam in the Hejaz. Its founder preached it gently at first, and some people followed him. Then he made public propaganda, and persecution overtook him and endangered his life. Thereupon he offered himself to the princes and heads of tribal federations, as the prophet had offered himself to the tribes. After this he emigrated (made a *hijra*) to Dera'iyyeh and its people swore allegiance to him, to aid him, as the prophet emigrated to Medina. But Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did not arrive at the point where he had to occupy himself with the affairs of this nether world. He left politics and government to Ibn Sa'oud and occupied himself with theology and religion, using government and its masters as instruments for his propaganda. When he had accomplished this, he began to summon the people to his creed, and whoever responded

was accepted by him, but against him who refused he stirred up the sword and kindled war. And the people of Nejd submitted to this creed and gave it their sincere obedience and sacrificed their lives in the path of its progress, as the Arabs had followed the prophet and made holy war with him. If the Turks and Egyptians had not joined hands in the attack on this creed and carried the war into its homeland, and that with forces and weapons to which the desert peoples were not accustomed, it is, indeed, extremely probable that this creed would have united the Arabs in one confession in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Hijra (19th and 20th centuries A.D.), as the appearance of Islam had unified their confession in the first century (7th century A.D.).

Now that which concerns us here with regard to this creed is its influence upon the intellectual and literary life among the Arabs. This influence was great and momentous in several directions. It awakened the Arabic soul and placed before it a high ideal which it loved and for which it strove mightily with sword and pen and tongue. It turned the eyes of Moslems in general and of the people of Iraq and Syria and Egypt in a special degree toward the peninsula of the Arabs. Then, while Turks and Egyptians were making war against the Wahhabites, the conservative theologians of Iraq, Sunnites and Shiites alike, wrote refutations of this creed and accused its adherents of being unbelievers. The Wahhabites wrote in defense of their faith, and they and their opponents, both, read the books of their forebears on Koran interpretation, on tradition, on theology, and on jurisprudence, seeking evidence for their opinions. Both, also, were publishing tracts and books which they themselves were composing, and, likewise, they were beginning to publish the ancient books to which they were referring in search for evidence and proof. In this manner new, strong life was infused into the legal school of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, which the Nejdites followed, and many tracts and works of Ibn Taymiyyah and of Ibn al-Kayyim were published. The entire Arabic world profited from this new intellectual movement, and in my mind there is no doubt that it was this movement which aroused the people of Yemen also. They rose up to defend their Zaidite faith, published their ancient books, and wrote new ones on jurisprudence, theology, and traditions. The printing presses of Cairo have remained busy to the present time printing a variety of books for the Wahhabites

of the people of Nejd and for the Zaidites of the people of Yemen.

In the course of this vigorous movement there appeared around the emirs of the people of Nejd, who were waging holy war, a group of poets who began to glory in their victories in battles and to apologize for such defeats as overtook them. It cannot be said that they brought about a renaissance of poetry or that they created what had not existed before, but at least they returned in their poetry to the ancient style and gave us in the twelfth and thirteenth century in pure Arabic language that sweet Arabic song, which had not been heard in the memory of living men. This song, whose authors did not imitate the city folk nor force themselves to search for new and strange expressions, was conceived in liberty and borne along by all the greatness, the yearning for the highest ideal, and the strong longing for the revival of ancient glory, which filled its soul.

The Egyptians succeeded in suppressing this Wahhabite uprising, or we may say, they succeeded in disrupting this rise. They weakened its political power, but their own political power was weakened by Europe in the treaty of 1840. The Turks were too impotent to exercise governmental authority in the heart of the Arabian peninsula. So the Wahhabites rested and recovered from their wounds and renewed their strength and vigor, and their religious rise went on in its even way. Then, in these days, a new political rise stirred in this movement, extended its sway over all of Nejd and all of Hejaz, and renewed for its adherents their high ideal which is nothing less than the unification of Arabia in one confession of faith. This goal, however, is now not so smooth nor so easy of attainment, as it was in the early years of the nineteenth century. The feeling of nationalism has been aroused in all Arabic lands, and Arabia is encompassed on all its borders by a power, in which there is none of the weakness and corruption, the confusion and poverty which characterized Turkey—the power of the English. But we are not concerned here with the political future of this land, we are concerned only with its literary future. And it is certain that this literary future will be glorious some day, near or far.

The king of the Wahhabites has united under his sway a very large portion of the Arabic peninsula, but no way is left open whereby the Wahhabites and others of the kings and princes of the

Arabs may remain isolated from the common life of the world, as formerly they were. They are forced of necessity to establish orderly political and economic relations with Islamic and European states and they have begun to arrange these relations in fact. The Wahhabites have a minister plenipotentiary in London and the king of the Wahhabites is in constant touch with the representative of the English in Iraq. The people of Yemen maintain uninterrupted connection with the English in Aden, and the Italians have begun to encompass them. And there are other bonds, which are perhaps stronger and swifter in their influence than these political and economic ties. These are the intellectual ties furnished by newspapers, journals, and books. These papers, journals, and books are now printed in numbers in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and America. All or many of them reach a great number of the inhabitants of Arabia. They read and sometimes understand; at other times understanding is beyond them; in any case they admire, and admiration is the beginning of imitation, and imitation is the beginning of original production. And, indeed, clearly and conspicuously harbingers of new life have already appeared. At Mecca a paper speaks with the tongue of the government and publishes literary and political news as was done at first by the official Egyptian gazette in Mohammed Ali's time. It was named *al-Kibla* in the days of the Hashimite kingdom, and it is now named *Umm al-Kura* (Mother of Towns). In Mecca has appeared a journal *al-Islah* (Reform), and in Mecca there are printing-presses. In Mecca, likewise, and in other cities of the Hejaz there are civic schools about on the same level as the Egyptian elementary schools. In them the elements of science are taught by modern methods, and in them may be learned a few European languages; all this beside the old religious teaching. Still more strange than this is the fact that propaganda for modernization in thought and literary culture, written by Egyptians and Syrians, has for a number of years been spread in Hejaz, not without appreciable effect. This propaganda is very fanatical, and extremely hostile to everything old in the Hejaz, religious and literary education, governmental organization, and economic life. The opposition to this propaganda holds, that the Hejaz must live the life of a free and independent land; that it should guard its ancient heritage in religion and language, and that beyond that it should take from the European what it may;

that it should profit from the visit of the Moslems for the pilgrimage, but that it should not dissipate itself among the Moslems; and that its people should do their utmost for a good civil education including the two languages, English and French, the one being the language of economics and commerce, the other that of science and culture. Furthermore the Hejaz has in fact begun to send its youths to Egypt to study science there as the Egyptians study it. The propagandists for modernism, however, are not content with this; they want to have the sons of the Hejaz sent to Paris and to London. And still more the Hejazian modernists have really begun to compose poetry and prose after their modernist school, but they have not yet reached the point where the Hejaz has acquired a literary individuality of its own; they are merely disciples of the Syrians, especially the Syrian emigrants to America. They seek their highest ideal in literature in Ameen al-Rihani, Jabran Khalil Jabran and their fellows³

The people of Nejd, too, despite their determined conservatism in regard to their Wahhabite creed, will not be able to resist successfully the modernizing movement which reaches them from Iraq and Egypt. There lie before me at this moment no small number of odes composed by a group of Nejdite poets in honor of King Abd al-Aziz Sa'oud. He who reads these odes will find them very manifestly influenced by the Iraqensian spirit, whose foremost exponents are Jamil al-Zahawī, Ma'rouf al-Rusafi, and Abd al-Muhsin al-Kazimi, and by the Egyptian spirit which stands out clearly in the poetry of Hafiz and Shawqī. Nevertheless the new Nejdite poetry has an individuality which distinguishes it from the poetry of Iraq and that of Egypt. Despite the influence of modernistic poets it sticks with strange tenacity to its own language. It selects strange rhymes and carries them, oft repeated, through many verses. It indulges freely in strange bedouin terms, as though it were searching for them in the dictionaries or as though it were taking them from the tongue of the Nejd deserts, which is in substance the tongue of ancient Arabic poetry. Rarely are the Nejdite poets able to follow the poets of Iraq, where these latter exhibit

³On everything connected with the modernist movement in the Hejaz see the book *Khawātir Musrikhat*, by Hasan Awwad, printed in Cairo in 1345 A.H. (1927 A.D.)

the influence of the philosophy of al-Ma'arri⁴ and al-Khayyam, or of modern European contentions, nor do they follow the Egyptians in their extreme modernism in the words, style, and content of poetry. They are far nearer to a revival of ancient poetry than to a creation of a new poetry. They are, after all, bedouin. They address their poetry to the king as the ancients used to do, and the king rewards them for their poems sometimes with camels and at other times with garments; rarely does he give them their reward in gold or silver. Yet the people of Nejd frequently visit Iraq and the Iraqisians go up to Nejd. It is inevitable, therefore, that the relations of these two countries should return to something of the state in which they were in the days of the Omayyads, when there was a lively exchange of cultural values between them.

In the Tihamah and in Asir there is indeed intellectual life; but it is very slender; it is restricted to Sufic mysticism and that under the influence of North Africa. For the Idrisids brought their *Maghrebine* Sufic rite with them and spread it in the land, when they seized the political power. This did not, however, engender any literary rise, nor, indeed, did it effect any change whatever in the state of literary culture.

The Yemen is by far the most conservative Arabic country. In true medieval fashion its people busy themselves with the sciences of religion according to the Zaidite rite of the Shi'ah. They publish many books on these sciences and have them printed in Egypt. They produce much poetry, but it continues along antiquated lines in the Egypto-Syrian spirit, prevalent in the poetry there before the rise of modernism. Moreover poetry for them is mingled with the sciences of religion. Rarely will you find among them a religious scholar who has not some share in poetry. Most of their *imams* are poets, and their Imam Yahya even now excels in poetry after the ancient manner. The strange thing about Yemen is that throughout the Middle Ages it continued in its settled territories to be the foremost of Arabic lands in science and literary culture. It might have been expected, therefore, that it would have been quickest among Arab lands to seize upon the means of the new life. Yet it is now perhaps the most intent of all Islamic lands to retain the pattern of antiquated civilization and antiquated literary forms. The people of Yemen come to visit Egypt, but they visit it for com-

⁴A famous blind sceptic, belonging to the generation before Omar Khayyam.

mercial purposes or to study science in the Azhar. None of them think of associating themselves with modern schools. In Sanaa there is neither school nor printing-press. The reason for this is apparently the wariness of the people of Yemen against foreigners, and they lock the gates of their land in the faces of foreigners both Moslems and Europeans. But modern material civilization has already established its hold on the coasts of Yemen. It will without fail break through the closed gates and Yemen will not be able to resist its advance.

To sum up, Arabia at present encompasses two widely different types of intellectual life: one conservative, held fast in the grasp of ignorance and widespread illiteracy; the other modernist, steadily rising by the force of its connection with Europe and advanced Islamic lands. The duel between these two types of life is becoming intense, but victory rests assured on the side of the new life. For Arabia has been laid open to European civilization, and it will not be possible henceforth to lock its gates in the face of this civilization. It may, indeed, be said that Arabia in earlier centuries was laid open to Islamic civilization, then locked its gates against it. What is to prevent it from being laid open to modern civilization now, then shutting itself away from it after a space? The answer to this objection is easy. Ancient Islamic civilization entered the land of the Arabs on the backs of camels and in handwritten books. Now modern civilization has broken over this land in automobiles and steamers, with the telegraph and the telephone, in printed books, papers, and journals, and how shall the desert resist these manifold forces? The future in Arabia, then, belongs to the modern life, and this future may be near in some parts and remote in others, but it is bound to arrive without fail.

THE ANCIENT AND MODERN INHABITANTS OF ARABIA

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THE Arabian peninsula, which lies at the southwestern extremity of Asia, has been inhabited from the earliest pre-historic period down to modern times.

The geographical position of this peninsula in relation to the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe, naturally marks Arabia as a region through which migrating peoples must have passed from the earliest times. Furthermore, historical tradition lends its support to the fact that the "Garden of Eden" lay to the northeast of Arabia in the alluvial plain which extends between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and since the dawn of history, people have been drawn toward this spot, which is known as the "Fertile Crescent." Southwestern Asia, therefore, is of paramount importance from a geographical and anthropological standpoint.

Owing to its inaccessibility in modern times, combined with the hostile attitude of its inhabitants, who have until this century refused the influences of western civilization to a marked degree, Arabia has remained little known to the outside world. The opening up of the Near East during the past generation has been due primarily to the World War and its aftermath. The introduction of the airplane and the automobile, means of transportation which are independent of water holes, and the advent of travelers in search of oil and precious metals, as well as new methods of transportation for the pilgrims to and from Mecca, have all tended to change the life and customs of the people. Since we are here concerned primarily with the ancient and modern population of Arabia, we need not go into details regarding the changes which have influenced the character of the modern population beyond recalling that these and many other factors have been and are now at work.

Believing the French motto "*commençons au commencement*" to be correct in this instance, let us trace the evidence now available for the continuous inhabitation of Arabia from prehistoric man¹ down to the modern peoples.

¹For general description see my article entitled "The Antiquity of Man in Southwestern Asia," in a forthcoming number of the *American Anthropologist*.

Since environment plays an important rôle in the problem, it will be necessary to outline the climatic changes, which have occurred in this area during the past few thousand years. In prehistoric times the climate was very different from that of today. Owing to its low latitude and general aridity Arabia must be classed among the hot regions of the earth. Evidence has been obtained² to show that the North Arabian Desert was at one time fertile and well watered, and able to support a large semi-nomadic population. As an example of the change of climate, let us consider the Roman fortress of Qasr Burku, which was built in the fourth century³ by legionnaires, and which was the most eastern outpost of the Roman Empire. At this fort the water supply for the troops was drawn from a large catchment basin or reservoir, which had been faced with dressed basalt blocks. When we visited this fortress in 1928⁴ there was no trace of water, either in the reservoir or in the wells nearby, and our Solubbi (Sleyb) guide informed us that there had never been water in the basin during his lifetime and that the wells, which were cut deep into the limestone were often dry. This means that the climate had changed so markedly in fifteen hundred years that it would now be impossible to live at Qasr Burku unless water was brought from the nearest well at El Jidd, which lies some sixty miles to the east, although during the Roman occupation the water supply, combined with Roman engineering principles, was sufficient to support a legion^{4a} of armed men.

There are other evidences of the change of climate; and in explanation of the early fertility, it will suffice at this point to note that it is believed that the ice sheet never extended south of the great mountains in Asia Minor, so that Arabia was never made uninhabitable by glaciation. There is also abundant evidence that the *wadis*, dry stream beds, which today carry water only during the rainy season, must have flowed with water during the greater part, if not during the entire year. In ancient times, therefore, climatic conditions must have produced large areas having a genial temperature and an adequate water supply, whereas today Arabia

²Field Museum North Arabian Desert Expeditions, 1927-28.

³Prentice, W. K. "An Inscribed Door Lintel from Qasr Burku," *Am. Journ. of Archaeology*, Jan.-Mar., 1931.

⁴Field Museum North Arabian Desert Expeditions, April 18-19, 1928.

^{4a}Cf. At Qasr el Hallabat a Latin inscription, dated 214 A.D., states that the soldiers of the First Ulpian Cohort of Thracians, one thousand strong, built this fort.

can support only a nomadic or semi-nomadic population, except in certain oases and along the peripheral region.

Let us now turn to the evidence left by man himself. Since this area is one of the least explored regions of Asia, it stands to reason that the study of the archaeology of Arabia must be less advanced than that of more accessible regions. In view of this fact, it will be desirable to state briefly the discoveries which have been made, and to attempt to outline a logical, though not necessarily proven, theory which will fit the facts as they are now known. The archaeological evidence from North Arabia indicates that man in various palaeolithic and neolithic phases of culture lived in this now inhospitable wilderness, which can today be inhabited only by the nomadic Beduins.

Hundreds of flint implements, as well as thousands of flakes and rejects, were collected by the Field Museum North Arabian Desert Expeditions⁵ during 1927 and 1928 in the area lying between the Hejaz Railway and Baghdad. With the exception of a few isolated sites the flint implements were found on the surface of the desert, and thus no stratigraphy was possible. The only method which could be employed for the determination of their age was to attempt to grade the specimens by means of the various shades of patination. This is an uncertain method, at best, since there are many chemical and mechanical agents which form patina, and the rate of discoloration varies very markedly within even a relatively small area. Furthermore, in a semi-desert region the effect of wind, which produces "desert varnish," "*dreikanter*," and an etched effect on the exposed surface of the flint cannot be a direct indication of the time of exposure. For example, in the Sinai desert, T. E. Lawrence found heavy patination on pieces of flint, whose fractured edges had been exposed to the vagaries of the climate for only about twenty years.

In one small area, however, it is plausible to estimate the relative age of a fractured surface by comparison with other pieces from this same locality. In other words, the darker the patination the older the fracture, although great caution must be exercised when this procedure is used. Fortunately, it will be possible to compare the flint implements from the surface of the high desert with those from the stratified deposits in the cave of Shukbah, on

⁵See "Early Man in North Arabia," *Natural History Magazine*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, 1929, pp. 33-44.



Courtesy of Field Museum of Natural History

MEMBERS OF THE RUWALLA TRIBE, NORTH ARABIAN DESERT

the pleasant slopes of Mount Carmel. This site has been excavated by Miss Dorothy Garrod and her associates and next spring she will write a report on the flints collected by the Field Museum North Arabian Desert Expeditions, comparing the various tools represented with the types excavated on Mount Carmel, where a Neanderthaloid⁶ family has been found.

The implements from the high desert include a typologically Upper Chellean *coup-de-poing*, which was found by the writer at a depth of eleven feet six inches below the surface of a gravel bed at Bayir Wells, which lie due east of Ma'an on the Hejaz Railway. This discovery proves the existence of man in a lower palaeolithic phase of culture in this region. I have found implements of this type in the Wadi Seir at Petra, also; as did Charles M. Doughty, the inspired writer of *Arabia Deserta*, some fifty years before.

The majority of the implements were upper palaeolithic in type, although tools of Mousterian technique were found in certain localities. There were also neolithic stations, although these were rare. In one locality⁷ t-shaped implements were found, suggesting a definite neolithic phase. The most modern tools were the rejects once used by Beduins as strike-a-lights. In the tents of the Howeitat⁸ I had the privilege of seeing Beduins make fire with such flints against steel. It is comparatively easy to recognize a reject of this nature. According to all Beduins interrogated, flint is never used as a knife, although they said that their ancestors used a stone knife, a practice which had been discarded for generations.

In attempting to date these implements it must be noted that typological comparisons by no means indicate a contemporaneous development with stratified sites in western Europe or any other area. It will be some time before general conclusions of this character can be safely drawn.

I suggest the following theory to explain the facts above outlined. Palaeolithic and neolithic man inhabited North Arabia, while the climate was genial and the region well watered. Some time before the historic period, the climate had changed to a marked degree and the inhabitants were forced to become nomads (such as the modern Beduins) or to migrate to water. Those who chose the

⁶Mousterian in culture, but not true Neanderthal in physical type.

⁷Near landing-ground "K" on the Amman to Baghdad air route.

⁸At el Jafar east of Ma'an.

latter course moved eastwards to water and encamped beside the banks of the cool and refreshing Euphrates River. They were thus the first inhabitants of Mesopotamia, since in former times the Persian Gulf extended at least as far north as Baghdad. Furthermore, the earliest implements from just above virgin soil at Kish⁹ resemble closely the latest neolithic examples from the surface of the high desert. This theory awaits confirmation or disproof through additional research and excavation.

To summarize, let us state that flint implements of palaeolithic and neolithic types occur in quantity on the surface of the desert of North Arabia, including what is now part of the political divisions of Trans-Jordan, Syria, and western Iraq. There is no information regarding the antiquity of man in Central Arabia, although in historic times the Romans penetrated far into this territory. It is difficult to state whether similar worked tools occur to the south, since among the relatively small number of travelers who have been into that region, few have been interested or qualified to collect them.

In South Arabia the valiant efforts of Bertram Thomas, who was the first¹⁰ white man to cross or even to enter the "Empty Quarter" or Rub' al Khali, enabled him to record¹¹ a perfect flint arrowhead from the sands of Sanam, and he adds that the Beduins in this inhospitable waste of sand sometimes use flint strike-a-lights. H. St. J. Philby, who made a remarkable journey into the center of the Rub' al Khali during the early part of this year, brought back some flint implements¹² a description of which has not yet been published.

This, in brief, summarizes the information now available regarding the antiquity of man in Arabia, and we can now turn our attention to the modern inhabitants.

With regard to the living peoples of Arabia, there are many complicated factors which enter into the problem. As has been stated, Arabia lies at one of the focal points between Asia, Africa, and Europe, and this would to some extent account for the racial

⁹Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia. Virgin soil was reached twenty meters below the surface of the mound in the Inghara complex.

¹⁰Early in 1931.

¹¹*Arabia Felix*, New York, 1932, p. 207.

¹²Now in the British Museum.



Courtesy of Field Museum of Natural History

A WAHHABI WHO HAD BECOME AN IRAQ DESERT POLICEMAN.

mixtures, which now comprise the modern population. The basic stocks are two-fold, consisting of the Mediterranean and Armenoid groups. Regarding the former, this appears to be a primitive Eur-African type possessing an extremely long-headed skull of small cranial capacity, generally accompanied by considerable development of the temporal muscles. On the other hand the Armenoids, who are considered to be an Asiatic branch of Alpine man, possess heads which are both short and high, with a flattened occiput. The nose is aquiline with wide tips and is usually described as the Armenoid nose. In southwestern Asia there is also a negroid element, since slaves have been imported into Arabia for many generations and these negroes have left their mark on the physical type. Among the tents of the great sheikhs of the North Arabian Desert, the writer¹³ has frequently seen negroes, who usually serve in the capacity of personal servants or bodyguard of the sheikh.

These three fundamental elements of the modern population, which can in no sense be called homogeneous, combined with racial admixture in historical times, result in a variety of ethnic groups. It is not possible here to give a detailed description of the small groups, which together form the modern population of Arabia. I must rather outline the main divisions, and discuss certain questions in connection with the various problems, which now await solution.

Anthropometric data on the Beduins of North Arabia is deplorably scarce, but from personal observation¹⁴ among the great tribes of the high desert, including the Howeitat (ibn Jazi and the Tayi), Shammar, Ruwalla,¹⁵ and Sb'aa, I conclude that the average cephalic index of these tribesmen would place them in the long-headed group.¹⁶ These people belong to the great Mediterranean race and almost certainly are the direct descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the region, who chose to become nomads rather than to migrate to a more friendly climate.

¹³See "Among the Beduins of North Arabia," *Open Court*, vol. XLV, no. 905, October, 1931.

¹⁴As leader of the Field Museum North Arabian Desert Expeditions 1927-28.

¹⁵See the two examples on page 850.

¹⁶The cephalic index of 38 Ba'ij Beduins measured in 1928 between Kish and Jemdet Nasr places them in the dolicocephalic group. See *Arabia Felix*, appendix by Sir Arthur Keith & Dr. W. M. Krogman.

The word "Semite," which has come to have both linguistic and cultural significance, seems inapplicable to the precursors of the modern Beduins and I therefore suggest the term Proto-Mediterranean, which in its broadest sense includes the common ancestors of the entire Mediterranean group comprising the Eur-African, Brown race, and many other sub-groups.

To give an example of an interesting sub-group, there are the Solubbi, who claim a Christian origin and are despised by the Arabs as an inferior race. They are smiths by trade and are the best guides and the most skilful hunters in all North Arabia. From a physical point of view they appear to be racially distinct from the Beduins, since they do not possess the typical features of the desert nomad. They also seem to be smaller in stature and general physique than the Beduins, although they are capable of enduring great privations and hardships. The history, folklore, and physical characters of this group will well repay detailed study and investigation.

Although there are no anthropometric measurements on the peoples of Central Arabia, there is every reason to believe that the majority of the population are long-headed and belong to the Mediterranean group rather than to the enigmatic brachycephals of the south. The brachycephalic element as well as that of the negro has probably drifted in and mingled with the population to some extent. This will probably be more true the further south one goes to make observations.

The difference between the Arabs of the south and those of the north, who wander over the alluvial plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, is very marked from an anthropometric point of view. This fact, which has been proven by various small samplings of the population of South Arabia, is a considerable surprise to anthropologists, who would have predicted that these tribesmen and sedentary Arabs belonged to the great Mediterranean stock, which dominates the population of the north. Measurements show that the South Arabs are extremely round-headed and that their physical characters in general differentiate them from the North Arabs. The information at present available allies them with the inhabitants of northeastern Africa. The photographs of Hadramaut racial types, which illustrate the excellent article by van der



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A CHIEF FROM DHUFAR
Southwest Arabia

Meulen¹⁷ as well as a magnificent series taken recently by Hans Helfritz¹⁸ lend support to this theory.

There seems to have been a migratory barrier, which has caused this complete differentiation between the peoples of the north and the south. The answer lies in the existence of the great desert of Rub' al Khali, which has undoubtedly played a great part in separating the peoples of the two sections. As proof of this, only a dozen adventurous travelers have entered Central Arabia during the past two thousand years. Furthermore, the "Empty Quarter" had never been crossed by a white man until Bertram Thomas made his historic journey across this region in 1931. Philby also made a remarkable journey into the center of this desert during the early part of this year, and through the work of these two men during the past two years, a wealth of information has come to hand regarding the largest land surface in the world about which literally no details were previously known.

It will now be necessary to review the new material, which has come to light regarding the modern inhabitants. The South Arab¹⁹ is extremely round-headed with a small brain capacity; the hair is fuzzy, while on the face and body it may be almost absent, and the average complexion is very dark. While many of the characters resemble those found among the ancient and modern inhabitants of the region lying to the west of the Red Sea, there are other features which are Caucasian, Armenoid, Hamitic, or Dravidian, indicating an extremely hybrid origin, so that the problem still remains complex.

The Armenoid element is prevalent in Oman on the east and suggests a migratory connection with the home of the Armenoid type, which lies on a wide tract of Asia stretching from the Pamir to the countries washed by the eastern part of the Mediterranean.

Keith²⁰ puts forward a new theory to account for the apparent racial connections between the South Arabs and the peoples of Africa on the west and the inhabitants of India on the east. He suggests that at one time a proto-negroid belt crossed the ancient

¹⁷Meulen, D. van der, "Into Burning Hadramaut," *Nat. Geog. Mag.* Vol. LXII, No. 4, Washington, October, 1932.

¹⁸Privately shown to the writer by Mr. Helfritz in Berlin in October of this year.

¹⁹See illustrations on pages 856, 861, 865 and 872.

²⁰See appendix by Sir Arthur Keith and Dr. W. M. Krogman in *Arabia Felix* by Bertram Thomas, New York, 1931.

world, occupying all intermediate lands, Arabia, Baluchistan, India, Further India, the Philippines, and Malay Archipelago. Intermediate sections of this proto-negroid belt became transformed, giving rise to the Hamitic peoples of Africa and to their cousins the Dravidian and brown-skinned peoples of India. The Caucasian stock swept down into southwestern Asia in late pleistocene times, but before they reached the extreme south of the peninsula they had absorbed native Hamitic blood. This theory was advanced before Thomas' data was available²¹ but in conclusion Keith suggests that "the South Arabs represent a residue of Hamitic population which at one time occupied the whole of Arabia. To account for their round-headedness and certain Caucasian features we have had to postulate migration and miscegenation."

It is at present impossible to determine the probable physical characteristics of the aboriginal inhabitants of Arabia. Bertram Thomas believes²² that the earliest inhabitants were round-headed and that their descendants were driven back into the great southern territory in comparatively recent times. My own personal theory is that the Proto-Mediterraneans formed the aboriginal stock of Arabia and the brachycephals came in two streams into this territory, the one from Asia Minor or from the northeast down through the "Fertile Crescent"; the other from beyond its confines on the west via the straits of Bab el Mandeb. It would surprise me if prehistoric skulls found in the central region of South Arabia were discovered to be brachycephalic in type, since I should expect them to be racially akin and the direct ancestors of the modern Beduins of the North Arabian Desert.

Research, combined with the overwhelming desire for the advancement of knowledge at the cost of fearless personal hardship and the ever present element of chance, alone will produce the facts upon which the answer can be definitely decided.

It seems desirable to give a picture in silhouette of the life and customs of the peoples of Arabia, and rather than recapitulate descriptions of Beduin tribal life in the north, which has been so admirably portrayed by the inspired pen of Doughty, the poet who wrote poetry in prose, or by Lawrence, Musil, Philby, Thomas and

²¹*Anthropological Observations in South Arabia*, by Bertram Thomas, J.R.A.I. Vol. LXII, London, 1932.

²²During several discussions with the author in Chicago, March, 1932.

others, I shall quote the impressions of a traveler who has recently made a journey into the hinterland behind Aden. This traveler, who desires to remain anonymous, has sent to the writer a series of photographs of racial types (Pages 856, 861, 865 and 872), together with a sketch map (p. 868-9) and some notes on his journey.

As there is little known about this region and the habits and customs of the inhabitants, it will be of interest to quote at some length the impressions of this traveler, which were as follows:

"We found ourselves at Nisab, one of the larger Aulaqi towns of the Aden Protectorate. Nearby lives the Upper Aulaqi Sultan, who is an old man with six fine sons. A very large concourse of people were standing waiting to greet us and drums were being beaten with a steady tap. The Sultan wearing a highly colored turban, was dressed in white, mottled with indigo stains, surrounded by his own entourage, waited in the center of the front rank. We advanced in a rather irregular line to within about one hundred yards of the Sultan and his people, who were about two hundred in number, chanting the greeting song.

"Verses were compiled and sung, and poetry recited. The long columns of men in twos wheeled round and round the space between us. At the same time the old Sultan and his sons did the *mahuff*. This adds color to the ceremony, although in itself it is not very exciting. It consists in showing off on horseback; the riders, by dint of much use of rein and spur, start around the enclosed space at a fast canter, a wild uncollected gallop, the horses at one moment being urged forward and then next being violently wheeled. The horsemen carry rifles in their right hands and every now and then discharge them into the air, usually directly in front of the guests. On some occasions camels are used in the *mahuff*. After the last volley had been fired and we had shaken hands with the Sultan, the ceremony was over.

"The principal characteristics of Nisab are smells and sand. It lies in a flat, sandy plain and the slightest breath of wind lifts the tops off the sand dunes. The plain is ringed with low, black hills and the general effect of the scenery is desolate. In the early morning, after the hour of prayer, which is not too regularly observed by the Aulaqi, the women come out and collect firewood, pick cotton from the sparse cotton bushes, and draw water from one of the seven wells in and outside of the town. A few men stroll

out and water camels and sheep. The majority of the women are veiled, but those whose faces are visible, are made up in a sickly sort of yellow tinge, most unattractive, although, no doubt the design was the opposite. White women go to the extreme of burning in the sun and apply unhealthy cosmetics in order to become brown; the brown woman paints her face a lighter tinge; while it is obvious to the least critical observer that they are better either left as they are or veiled entirely! The men appear to do little but graze camels.

"Like most Arabian towns of the interior, the bazaar is a closed one, that is, if you wish to buy something you must hammer on the door of the person who makes it. The local manufactures are principally indigo dye, long strips of carpet, camel-saddles, ornaments of silver and a few *jambiyas*. The silver ornaments are interesting, since a large number of these are not made locally, but are found in one of the main Himyaritic ruins in this region.

"If Nisab, the largest town of this district, were deserted tomorrow, how long would traces of it remain? It would disappear in a short time. Yet, half buried in sand, pillaged for building material and washed by many floods, the outline of Himyaritic ruins remains clear to the eye, and their carved inscriptions almost as clear as the day that they were made.

"We were to follow along the old Himyaritic caravan route towards Beihan. There are two main tribes in Northern Beihan, the Musabein and the Balharith. Our Aulaqi escort were to hand us over to them at the border. We set off on trotting camels, with a mounted escort from the Hamami sub-tribe, who inhabit the desert between Nisab and the Ahl Karab (the latter are a lawless lot of free-booters). We moved along at a good swinging trot, singing the camel-trotting song. They differ from the marching songs in that they have the steady rhythm of the camel pace. Great use is made of a wide range of scale and the effect is more tuneful and inspiring than the songs of the hillmen. Only one white man, Mr. Wyman Bury, had ever before been to Beihan district, and he traveled along this very route thirty years ago. From his description of this track we had been prepared for a real desert journey, with no water on the way, wild Beduin raiding right and left, terrible heat and blinding sand-storms. The heat was almost unbearable, but the escort insured us from attack, the wind spared



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AHMED HASSAN NAKHAI (MISHAL),
A RELATIVE OF THE NAKHAI SULTAN
Southwest Arabia

us the sand, and there was a water hole on the way with water fit for the camels to drink.

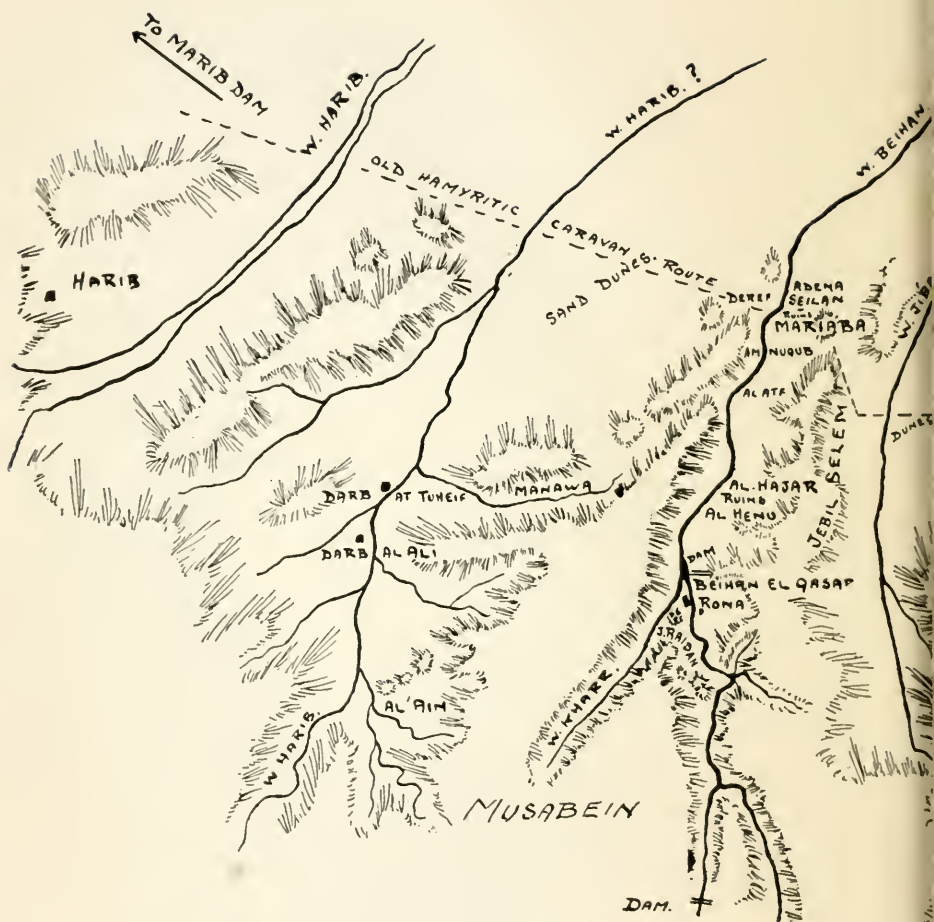
"The first part of the journey is over a flat plain, reddish in color, intersected by bare, black hills. Maps, it is perhaps needless to say, of this region are of very little use. We passed by the northern edge of the high mountainous district of Jebel en Nisiyin, which the track follows most of the way, and whose sides come down to the red sands like a cliff. The rocks are black and from it, into the desert, run a series of small *wadis*, whose presence is marked by lines of low trees and bushes. These lines of vegetation run into the desert for about eight hundred yards, after which there is nothing but gravel and sand. At last we reached the Musabein tribal border at the large well of Bir Jifar. Here we halted for a little, then moved out to greet our new escort, a combined party some two hundred strong, of the Musabein and Balharith tribes. We had left Jebel en Nisiyin behind the previous day. The Beihani party were drawn up in a long line, some on foot, the majority on camels and a few sheikhs on ponies. Our Aulaqi escort formed a line facing them. A large concourse of people was raising the sand. The greeting ceremony started. As the Beihanis moved forward in double ranks of about eight men, they came straight for the center of the line, a gap of about ten yards between each group of two ranks, wheeled right and fired their rifles as they passed us.

"We were now out of the indigo country. The Beihani wears a few more clothes and uses less dye, in this respect, approaching nearer to the Arab of the northern desert. They passed us and saluted about three times, while the sheikhs rode around them in a wild *mahuff*, discharging their silver-decorated rifles as they galloped past. The Aulaqi then responded. It was altogether a very good show, but a special number was in store because, when the ceremony should have closed, out came a party of about twenty Balharith, who threw an old skin on the ground and proceeded to blow it to pieces by firing their rifles at this target. It was an amusing sight to watch and was keenly appreciated by the spectators, although the performers, capering around in a circle, springing into the air and firing their rifles from all directions at the skin, obviously enjoyed it more than anyone else. To complete the picture of Arabs at play, around this mob of lunatics and almost knocking some of them down, rode a wild looking gentleman on a frenzied

gray pony. We shook hands with our hosts—it was quite pleasant to find after this that one's hand was not stained with indigo—and adjourned to have lunch and pay off our old escort.

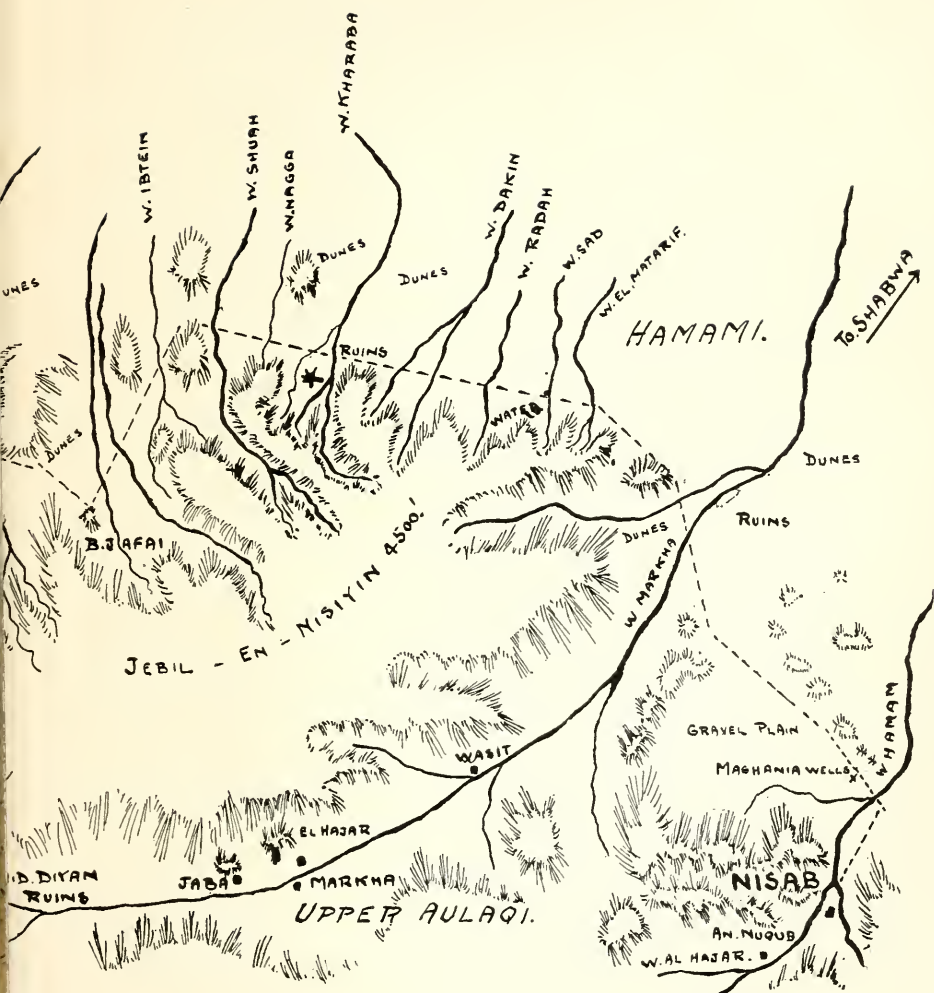
"The Beihani people are most picturesque, and this ride with them was unforgettable. Moving in a ragged line, we soon crossed a series of sand dunes. Twenty men dropped behind to look after the baggage caravan. From the top of the hill we had a wild ride down to the camping place. Those in the rear would start a song and would carry those in front with them, the pace increasing all the time. A new song would start, be roared out for a little and give place to another. A verse of poetry would be shouted and lost in the beginning of another, or drowned in a high-pitched war-cry. Camp was made, and by the light of big fires the caravan came in. The sound of their songs preceded them. Camels were unloaded and the outposts put out. After supper we were entertained by an interesting ceremony with which the Beihani precedes turning in for the night. The actual words were not fully understood even by our Arab cook, but the gist of them was as follows: a man out on the flank shouted out a long sentence which meant "Are you ready for war?" and the affirmative answer was roared out by those sitting round the fires and by the outposts. There was then a long silence, after which the man on the flank shouted "Load your rifles!" which was followed by a shout and a rattle of bolts going home.

"The next day was a short ride to Nuqub, the home of the Sherif of Beihan. This is not a village, but a *dar* with a well and small outhouses. From the top of the *dar* flew two Union Jacks, while below was gathered a large crowd surrounding the Sherif and his three sons. The town band, carrying umbrellas, consisted of two pipers, three drummers, and several others—presumably vocalists—who were getting ready for action by banging on their drums. The usual greeting ceremony followed, except for the town band, who stayed in front of us until they were assured that they would be tipped later, and also a cheerful gentleman, who kept things going by shooting off Chinese crackers. We went forward and met the Sherif, who was a middle-aged man strikingly handsome with a white beard, and the manners of a Victorian country squire. He was dressed in a long gray and yellow kilt, a large embroidered turban and a white coat. In his hand he held a long silver-bound spear. He shook hands with us and led us to our



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A DETAILED SKETCH MAP



quarters. The next day we moved south down the *wadi* sixteen miles to Beihan el Qasab, the home of the Musabein Sheikh, under the shadow of Jebel Raidan, a hill about eight hundred feet high, and a famous place of historical pilgrimage, although its interest has been extremely exaggerated by hearsay reports.

"Wadi Beihan is full of Himyaritic ruins. Walking down the *wadi* from Nuqub to Qasab, the traveler comes upon them slowly, and it is difficult to get a picture of them as they must have looked when they were inhabited, and far harder to describe them here. Hagar al Hamyr is now a high, raised mound of broken stones, through which shapes of the houses and walls appear. In Wadi Beihan there is very little left of the dam Al Qernan, which was not more than forty yards across, and its function was to deflect the *wadi* from the buildings on its northern side. The dam was so successful that the *wadi* bed is now fixed at this point and the small ruins north of the dam appear to be on high ground.

"This district has the attraction of all places with historical background. Along the Wadi Beihan are streets of ruins between Seilan, Hagar al Hamyr and Beihan el Qasab, ruins of houses in great profusion and remains of garrisons and watch towers on every hilltop. There are two ruined forts overlooking Beihan el Qasab, one being on Jebel Raidan. A track leads up to the southeast side and stops at the ruins of what must have been soldiers' quarters in Himyaritic times. There are many of these small square buildings, often in good repair; a cement wall encloses the side of a big boulder, which the Arabs agreed might have been used as a lavatory. The houses with a ground plan about fifteen feet square are all similar in construction and opening on to each other. From there a track goes up to the base of a precipitous top, where what was a natural way of ingress has been stepped and shored up with a high wall. From there it was necessary to scramble around a narrow slope of rock with an out-jutting rock above it. Turning to the left of a narrow cat-walk, there is a cement passage-way, still in excellent repair, without which it would be impossible to proceed further. There are no inscriptions, but near the summit there is a deep chimney in the rock.

"After heavy rains when the *wadis* come down in spate, the Arabs find ornaments, tablets and images, usually in bas-relief. The majority of these are found on the surface, but there is little doubt



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A CHIEF FROM DHUFAR

that a careful excavation would more than repay the work involved. The reason for this is to be found in the bursting of the great dam at Marib, and the tremendous exodus which must have followed this disaster. It seems plausible to suggest that if it were possible to excavate the ruins of Jasha Dezan, which only a few Beduin have seen, similar conditions to those of Pompeii would be found. These ruins, which are half covered with sand, are more extensive than those at Seilan, which cover an area of about five acres. The sudden cutting off of the water supply must indeed have occasioned a very rapid flight, if not absolute extinction. With little imagination, one can appreciate the dreadful predicament of this town and of the others, which were doubtless similarly situated when they found that the news of the breaking of the great dam was true, and that they were faced with a dry march of fifty miles for young and old alike. It would, indeed, be most surprising if they did not leave behind their statues and most of their treasures.

"At el Qasab, after another greeting ceremony, we entered the *dar* of the Ahl Musabein Sheikh, which had been given over to our use. An unpleasant ceremony always takes place on these occasions, consisting of the slaughter of animals in front of the doorstep. It is polite to do this just as the guest is about to enter. In this case, and similarly at Nuqub, three oxen were waiting in charge of six men. As we approached, they seized the wretched beasts, hamstringing them, not without a little struggle, and, pulling their heads back, cut their throats, drenching the sand with blood. It makes one sick to see it, but it is hard to keep the eyes away the first time—subsequent times it is quite easy. A horrid ceremony that ill accords with the dignity of the Arab.

"Afterwards we went to lunch with Sheikh Alowi, who lives in Beihan Suq, the market town. We entered an evil-smelling courtyard—the Arab does not understand or care about even the most elementary drainage—climbed some noisome stairs and sat around a dark room. Of necessity the windows in Arab houses are small. They have three functions, which they fulfil, as loopholes, ventilators, or spittoons; their usual size is about a foot by nine inches, and they are placed at the height of the shoulder of a man sitting. A carpet of native manufacture lay on the floor and sheep-skin rugs were placed, rolled up against the wall, against which to lean or rest one's back. A water pipe and a bag of tobacco were brought in, lit

with red-hot tinder, and placed in front of us. Our host was exactly as one would have pictured Ali Baba to have been. He was broad and round and wore the billowy flowing clothes of the desert Arab, and a tremendous turban of many colors.

"He was now becoming rapidly hysterical with joy at the approaching feast, standing in the doorway, giggling, gesticulating and making us welcome a hundred times. We drank quantities of coffee, and smoked pipe after pipe. The first course was brought in. We had by this time become used to eating raisins from San'a, clearing off flies with an outward sweep of the hand, and collecting the raisins on the return journey, but we were not prepared for what followed. Two slaves brought in three enormous flat baskets, on which reposed the mortal remains of the bullock that had, an hour and a quarter previously, been killed in front of us on the doorstep. I am not expert on the anatomy of bullocks, but I should say that most of him was there, including his internal machinery, and the flies had known all about it for some time.

"One learns self-control, however, and, having swallowed once or twice, we rapidly seized a piece of leg—rapidly because one must forestall the extra polite host, who will attempt to give one the greatest delicacy of all, the eye. We ate slowly and, to give honor where honor is due, the cook had done his job well and the meat was tender and well flavored. Also we were getting the very best that our now completely hysterical host could give us, and that makes all the difference.

"The surrounding sheikhs ate as only Arabs can, of course, no knives and forks other than razor-edged *jambiyas*. They seized a leg, cut off half a pound with a sweep of the knife, pulled a likely bit of fat with a sweep of the hand, and ate both pieces simultaneously with a couple of chews and a swallow. The bullock's remains disappeared in a surprisingly short space of time. We wiped our hands on our shorts, heaved a sigh of relief and waited for the next course with bated breath. Then in came a large bowl, with a pyramid of stiff porridge in it weighing about twenty pounds; then another and one more exclusively for us, over which was poured some thick yellow liquid, a combination of ghee and animal fat. Bowls were brought in and hiccough-hour had arrived. You do not stint yourself in hiccoughs in Arabia, nor do you attempt to conceal them, or say "Pardon" or anything like that, you let them have



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ABDULLAH IBN OTHMAN FADILI,
NEPHEW OF FADILI SULTAN
Southwest Arabia

their own way and they are considered complimentary to your host: only after a tremendous, soul-shaking one, you piously ejaculate "*Al Hamdu Lillah*" ("Praise be to God"). There were many such ejaculations.

"When the time came to go, our stout host bounded down the stairs in front of us, in the greatest of high spirits—the banquet had been an unqualified success, and he knew it. He was laughing, talking, and hiccupping all in the same breath, quite incomprehensible, with a faraway look of complete happiness in his rolling eyes. He bounded off his doorstep, trod with his bare right foot on an enormous camel thorn, hiccupped, lifted up his foot, withdrew the offending thorn, picked his teeth with it, and with a broad grin on his face shouted "*Al Hamdu Lillah*."

"Thus we left Sheikh Alowi outside his house in Beihan Suq."

In this article I have reviewed the evidence available for the antiquity of man in Arabia, together with a general statement of the ethnic problems concerning the modern inhabitants. It has also been my privilege to include a picture of the life and customs of the tribesmen in southwestern Arabia as described by a recent traveler in this region.

Statistical information in the form of large series of anthropometric data on the living peoples, as well as scientific excavation on a generous scale, will probably not be undertaken for some time, since apart from native hostility, financial crises retard pure research work of this nature. However, several schemes have recently been proposed for detailed studies of the anthropological and archaeological problems in Arabia, and it is to be hoped that the necessary financial support will be obtained so that the secrets, which now lie buried above and below the sands of Arabia may, before long, be added to the sum of man's knowledge of himself and his ancestors.

Let us in conclusion recall the well-chosen words of Pope: "The proper study of mankind is Man."

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